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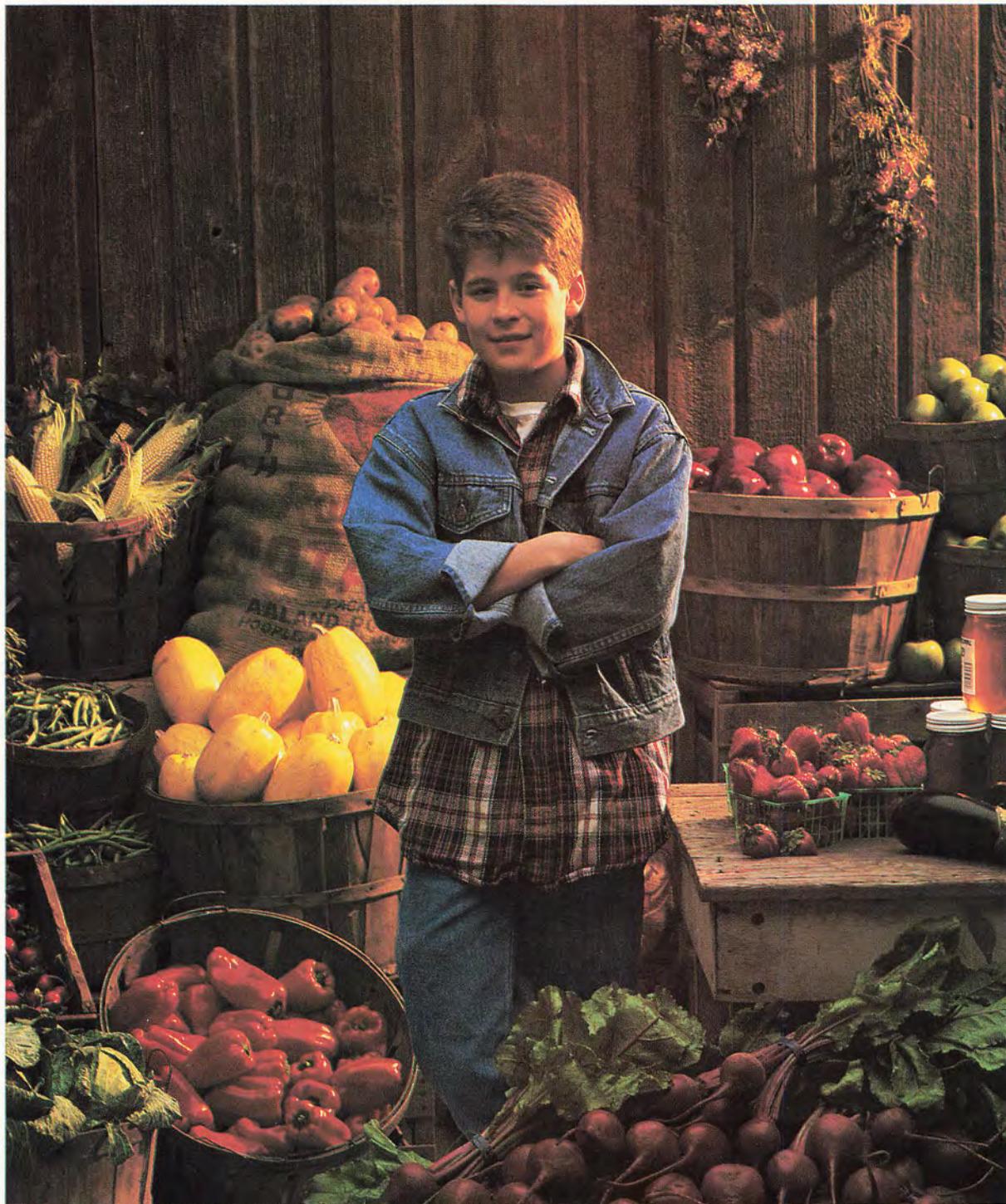
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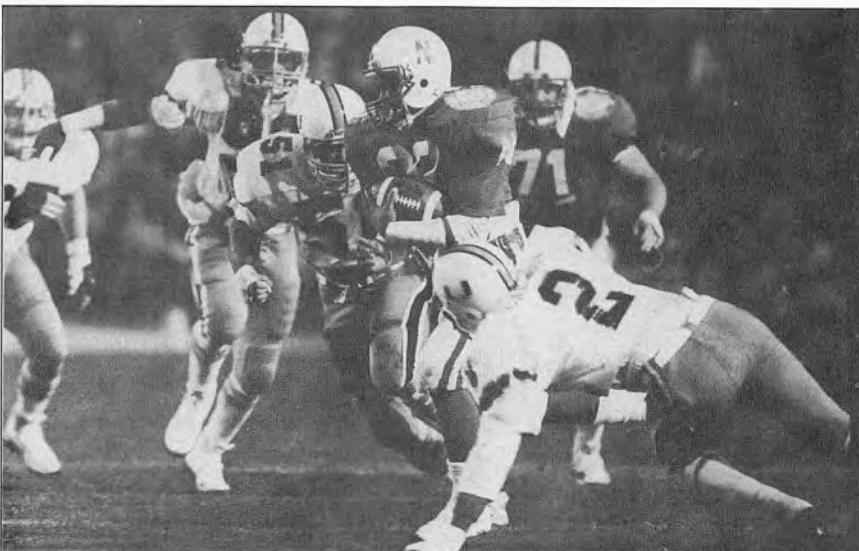
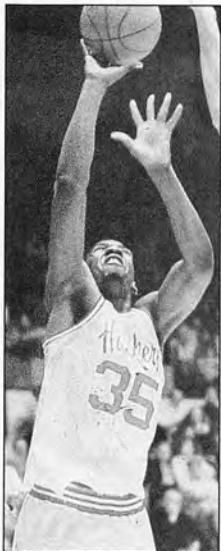
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Kent Wells (91) and the Black Shirts overpowered OU for the Big Eight title. Photo by Greg Phillips.

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PUBLISHER:

Mike Henry

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER:

Charles Brackin

OPERATIONS COORDINATOR:

Melania C. Ross

EDITOR:

Mark Owens

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS: Mike Babcock, Don Bryant, Bill Callahan, James Hale, Ken Hambleton, Rod Henkel, Don Lee, Virgil Parker, Chuck Pool, Pat Quinn.

CORRESPONDENTS:

Kevin Henry, Brad Wagner

CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS:

John Bills, Kent Morgan Olsen

ART DIRECTOR:

Tim Stephens

PRODUCTION:

Dana Hervey, Dina Dunn

CONTROLLER:

David Brandenburgh

PUBLIC RELATIONS DIRECTOR:

M.E. Johnson

MARKETING DIRECTOR:

Larry McWain

CIRCULATION:

Catherine Wheeler, Mary Janus

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT:

Debbie Gahm

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LETTERS

OKLAHOMA REVISITED

Dear Huskers:

Congratulations on a superb job at Norman this year. Our local group of Husker fans was extremely impressed with the fine courtesy and sportsmanship demonstrated between the Nebraska and Oklahoma players. For a game with all the hype, and for all the marbles for the Big Eight, the players were commendable.

It is too bad that Charles Fryar was tagged with a penalty, when all year long he has gone out of his way to be friendly to the opponent. He was being pulled off a pile-up for a fumble and was clearly, wrongly flagged. This team looks great and will certainly give Miami a courageous fight in the Orange Bowl. Ron Worland
Medford, Ore.

Dear Huskers:

So, Big Red, we finally beat Oklahoma. We watch or listen to every game.

Why play Miami in their own backyard? Go to another football field. There must be some place else.

Clarence Anderson
Sioux Falls, S.D.

Dear Huskers:

Tom Osborne will never win a national championship as long as Nebraska must play in the Orange Bowl as it is presently being played.

It is time to stop the cover-up. Any Orange Bowl game with Miami or any southern team is grossly unfair to the Big Eight representative.

Nebraska cannot defeat Miami in the Orange Bowl. The Orange Bowl committee won't let them. It's a home game for Miami and Nebraska will be hammered. The members of the Orange Bowl committee are also the regents, administrators and boosters of the University of Miami. They select the officials. They are either all SEC or Southern Independent and all anti-Big Eight. They

control the crowd noise and the scoreboard.

It is time to either level the playing conditions in Miami or the Big Eight should drop the Orange Bowl ties. Neither Nebraska or Oklahoma needs them.

When Nebraska lost to Clemson and Miami, the officials let them break many of the rules but called Nebraska close. Remember Rimington?

Let's have the Orange Bowl operate like the other major bowls: neutral officials from a conference; neutral announcers; neutral scoreboard; no band playing during the game.

Let's give Tom Osborne a fair chance to win a national championship.

Bob Cochrane
Melbourne Beach, Fla.

We want to hear your comments and answer your questions. Address them to "Letters," P.O. Box 83222, Lincoln, NE 68501. ■



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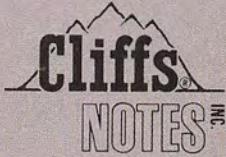
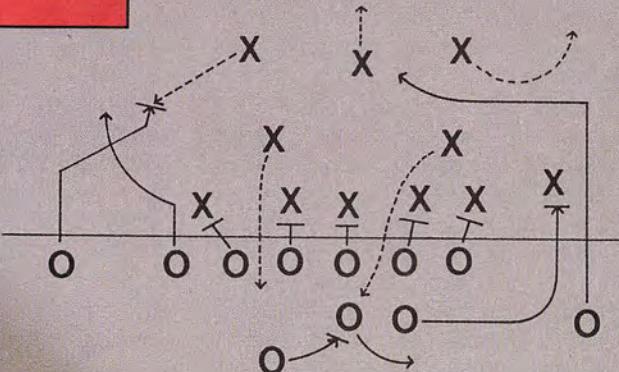
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My, Oh, My!

MIAMI IS DARN GOOD, BUT SO IS NEBRASKA, AS THE TWO BEST TEAMS OF THE 1980s MEET IN THE ORANGE BOWL.

The two winningest collegiate football teams in the decade of the 1980s, Nebraska and Miami, set the table for the 1989 Orange Bowl and each clings to the hope of a victory and an outside shot at the mythical national championship.

In the '80s, Nebraska owns the best record (93-17) which produces 84.5 percent victories. Close behind is Miami (86-19, 82%) after it finally closed out its regular 1988 campaign with a routine mop-up win over Brigham Young, 41-17. The Huskers are 11-1 while the Hurricanes are just a missed two-point conversion from a perfect campaign and "have to settle for" for a 10-1 standard.

As far as Nebraska is concerned, it's time to switch gears from the run-oriented Big Eight Conference and get ready for Miami's complex and super-effective passing offense when the 1989 Orange Bowl unfolds.

The Huskers face a gifted defending national championship squad in the Hurricane and Nebraska will long remember the '84 Orange Bowl when Miami deflected a two-point conversion attempt for a 31-30 victory and deprived the favored Huskers another national title. High scoring, post season affairs are a habit between these two teams: Bob Devaney's first Husker football edition outlasted Miami, 36-34, in the 1962 Gotham Bowl.

In both of the previous post-season meetings between the two teams the Cornhuskers were the pregame pick. Even with its sparkling record, there appears valid reason why Nebraska will go into this game a decided underdog and a review of the Hurricane talent might give some insight to this precarious claim.

Miami coach Jimmy Johnson disclaims some of the talent evaluations

about the Hurricanes, saying, "People seem to have the impression we have the same kind of talent we had a year ago. We don't. Last year we had 12 players who were drafted. We only have two or three who will be drafted this year."

Mind you, Johnson didn't say his team didn't deserve to be ranked No. 1 if it completes its sweep of Southeastern, Southwest, Big Ten and Big Eight champions, plus Florida State, by winning the upcoming Orange Bowl. There's much to be said for Miami's talent but, maybe, even more for the coaching job Johnson and staff have done with the green but potentially mouth-watering talent on hand.

Typical of Miami's improvement is the defensive secondary, which has en-

dured youth and position changes this year but closed out the season with four interceptions against BYU which led to a comfortable halftime margin, 34-3, to coast in for the win.

Quarterback Steve Walsh is the backbone of an improving offense and there's a host of ill-tempered young giants in the front-seven defensively that can make it uncomfortable for any opposing offense which isn't ready to go all out with its entire package. Let's cruise through the Hurricanes, position by position:

DEFENSE

Down Linemen: This is where Miami has a marvelous blend of experience, muscle and speed, with the emphasis on quickness. Even Defensive Coordinator Dave Wannstedt admits, "Of our defensive line starters, the slowest has 4.8 speed. Really, it's quicker than most of our linebackers."

The first name to mention is All-American end Bill Hawkins, who scored a key safety against Arkansas. He is a three-year starter for the Hurricanes, already holds his baccalaureate degree and has 4.8 speed. His coaches feel he will be a first-round choice in the upcoming NFL draft. His backup is redshirt freshman Eric Miller, who has recovered from knee surgery, and if Miller isn't ready to go, count on another rookie, Anthony Hamlet, to get some playing time. While Hawkins has been covered with awards, Hurricane coaches feel tackle Russell Maryland (4.8) has been playing "lights out" this season.

Maryland came back to fall practice weighing 325 pounds but has cut his weight down to 280, and they compare him to graduated All-American Jerome



Quarterback Steve Walsh was fourth in the Heisman Trophy race.

Brown. He's supported by 310-pound junior college All-American transfer Cortez Kennedy, who has 4.9 quickness. Jimmie Jones (4.7) and Shane Curry (4.7) are co-starters at the other tackle, although the Hurricanes won't hesitate to "swing" the sophomore Curry at either tackle position.

Miami moved Greg Mark (4.75) to defensive end "to get more plays out of him" and rate him "as tough as anyone we have." Junior Willis Peguese (4.85) is a solid backup to Mark and has played in every game. There appears to be no soft spots in this part of the Miami lineup which features good athletes with stunning quickness.

Right End

54 ***Bill Hawkins, 6-6, 260, sr.
95 Eric Miller, 6-4, 228, fr.
60 Anthony Hamlet, 6-3, 218, fr.

Right Tackle

63 **Jimmie Jones, 6-4, 261, jr.
44 Shane Curry, 6-4, 245, so.
96 Cortez Kennedy, 6-3, 310, jr.

Left Tackle

67 *Russell Maryland, 6-2, 272, so.
44 Shane Curry, 6-4, 245, so.

Left End

94 **Greg Mark, 6-4, 238, jr.
58 **Willis Peguese, 6-4, 245, jr.

*Letters earned

Linebackers: In the basic Miami 4-3 alignment, this group combines with the down linemen to give the Hurricanes a formidable front seven. When you figure middle linebacker Bernard Clark (voted the MVP in Miami's 1988 Orange Bowl win over Oklahoma) has been relegated to the role of alternate starter behind Rod Carter, you get a picture of the mouth-watering potential Miami has at this position.

Both have 4.8 speed and Carter, who missed part of the season with an ailing knee, is back at full-speed and regarded as the "big hit" player of this position. Wannstedt admits, "In our minds, Clark is still a starter." It's easy to see why he feels this way. But, weakside linebacker Maurice Crum (4.65) has made Carter the team's second leading tackler with his instinctive play. Behind



Jimmy Johnson is 43-4 since an early four-game losing streak at Miami.

Crum is lanky Kevin Harris (4.5), who is one of the fastest players on the team. At strongside linebacker, senior Randy Shannon (4.8) is starting for his third season. Junior college transfer Richard Newbill is filling in admirably as Shannon's alternate. Shannon and Crum have uncommon abilities to defend against the pass, too. Of his front seven, Coach Jimmy Johnson says, "We don't have a dominating lineman like Jerome Brown, but as a group we are better than last year." A note to remember, in Miami's first six games in the Orange Bowl this season, only Arkansas dented the Hurricane's defense for a touchdown.

Weakside Linebacker

49 *Maurice Crum, 6-0, 220, so.
85 *Kevin Harris, 6-4, 220, so.

Middle Linebacker

91 ***Rod Carter, 6-1, 231, sr.
57 **Bernard Clark, 6-2, 238, jr.

Strongside Linebacker

22 ***Randy Shannon, 6-0, 224, sr.
38 Richard Newbill, 6-3, 235, jr.

Defensive Secondary: It would be difficult to duplicate last year's secondary, but the Hurricanes are more than

adequate in this area. Miami flip-flops its cornerbacks, the right corner plays to the wide side of the field and the left corner the boundary side. After the loss to Notre Dame, Miami inserted freshman Charles Pharms (4.6) at free safety and moved senior Bubba McDowell (4.5) to the corner. Johnson says, "These moves made us better in the secondary." Starting at right corner is three-year starter Donald Ellis (4.5), who is regarded as "a heckuva player." He's the best one-on-one coverage man for Miami. Roland Smith (4.6), who earned his first letter on the special teams, is the backup and the heir apparent to Ellis' job. McDowell is considered NFL talent and his alternate, Kenny Berry (4.6), started the first four games before McDowell was moved. At free safety, Pharms is the first true freshman to start at Miami under Johnson and is as knowledgeable as any rookie ever to don a Hurricane uniform. Back of Pharms is letterman sophomore Robert Bailey, who also serves as the "nickel back" in passing situations. At strong safety, veteran Bobby Harden (4.6) is a good, physical player, who cut his teeth on special teams past. His support, Hurlie Brown, is the least used player in the secondary but the redshirt freshman is considered a good prospect. The ferocious pass rush of the line and talents of the linebackers have helped Miami's secondary improve steadily as the 1988 season has gone along.

Field Cornerback

29 ***Donald Ellis, 5-11, 195, sr.
16 *Roland Smith, 5-9, 183, so.

Boundary Cornerback

48 ***Bubba McDowell, 6-1, 195,
sr.

6 *Kenny Berry, 6-2, 185, jr.

Free Safety

2 Charles Pharms, 5-11, 180, fr.
23 *Robert Bailey, 5-10, 170, so.

Strong Safety

39 **Bobby Harden, 6-2, 195, jr.
8 Hurlie Brown, 6-1, 190, fr.

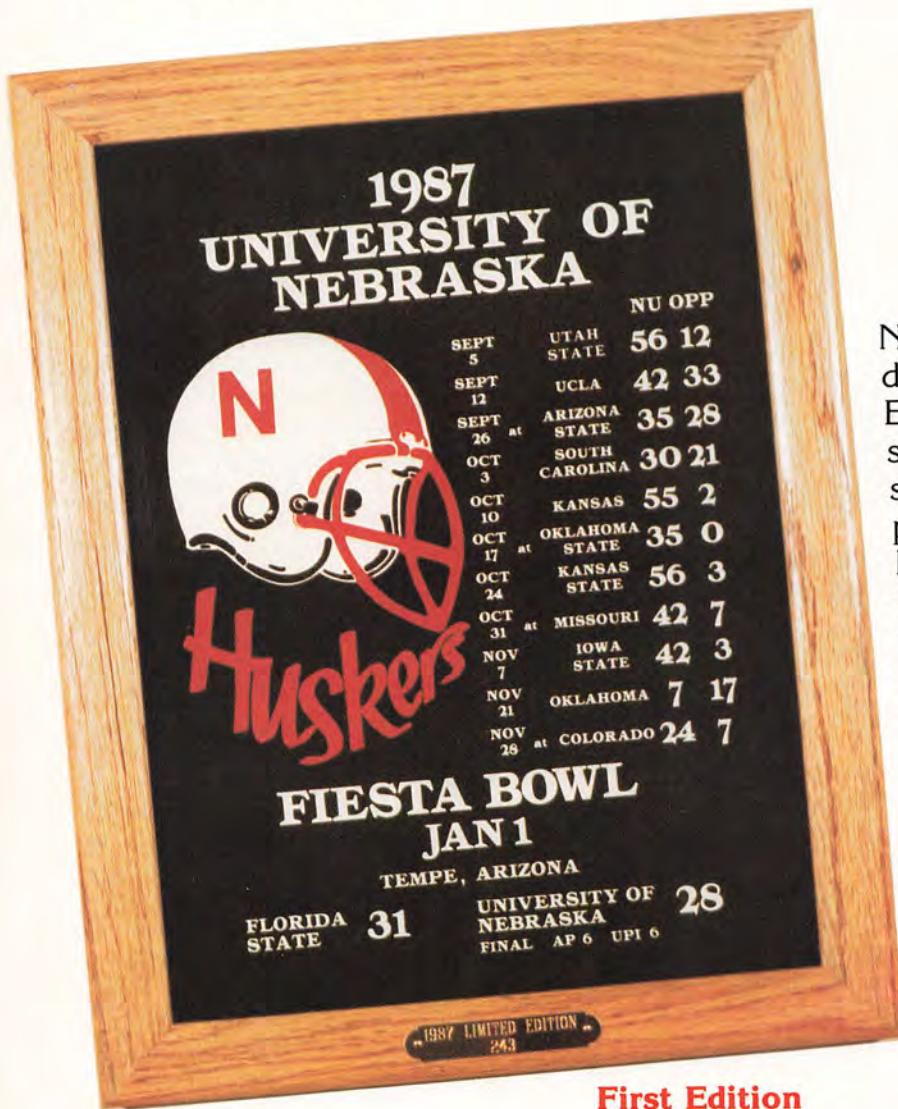
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with Steve Walsh, whose name made many All-American ballots this season. One Miami assistant coach said, "The biggest mistake everybody makes is underestimating the strength of Steve's arm. He's a tough, field-smart kid, who'll play as good as a guy can play. I can't remember him having a bad game this season."

Walsh completes about 60 percent of his passes, and, only a junior, he has already directed Miami to one national championship. Walsh has already broken Vinny Testaverde's single-season and career records for scoring passes, and over the past two years he has guided Miami to a 22-1 record. He's the key man in Miami's rebuilt offense.

Behind Walsh is Craig Erickson, one of the most actively recruited players on the Miami roster. Erickson owns a great arm, and Miami railbirds claim he can throw just like the fabled Testaverde. In fact, the comparisons say Walsh is like Bernie Kosar, and, with Erickson around, it appears the tradition of excellence in the passing game at Miami is bountifully stocked to continue. If Walsh goes down, Miami won't panic with Erickson at the controls.

Quarterback

- 4 *Steve Walsh, 6-3, 195, jr.
- 7 *Craig Erickson, 6-2, 195, so.

Running Backs: It's prerequisite at Miami that all of the running backs have good pass-receiving hands, witness the fact that fullback Cleveland Gary leads the team in rushing and receiving. It's testimony to the astute flexibility of the Miami coaches to recover from the loss of three NFL receivers (Brian Blades, Michael Irvin and Brett Perriman) and two present pro running backs (Melvin Bratton and Warren Williams) to effectively execute its complex passing offense.

Gary (4.6) is a brute of a runner and has the uncanny knack of understanding pass coverages to get open. Gary runs routes in an exemplary manner and rates definite pro consideration after this season. Shannon Crowell (4.6) is the most underrated player on the roster. He plays both tailback and fullback effectively. Burly Tracy Waiters was sup-

posed to be Gary's backup. However, he injured a knee early in the year but should be full speed for the Orange Bowl. At tailback, the starter will be Leonard Conley (4.6), who breaks an amazing number of tackles despite his lack of size. Alex Johnson (4.5) is the fastest of the lot but, like Waiters, he's been bothered by injuries.

Tailback

- 28 *Leonard Conley, 5-9, 170, so.
- 21 *Alex Johnson, 5-9, 170, so.
- 31 *Fred Highsmith, 6-1, 224, sr.

Fullback

- 43 **Cleveland Gary, 6-2, 226, sr.
- 20 *Shannon Crowell, 5-11, 194, so.
- 34 **Tracy Waiters, 5-11, 227, sr.

Recently, Fred Highsmith (4.6), cousin to Alonzo Highsmith of the Houston Oilers, is a "big, tough runner," who will be pushing for more playing time against Nebraska. Of this list of a half-

dozen running backs, the three big backs...Gary, Highsmith and Waiters...are all seniors. Statistically, the Miami rushing attack isn't what it was in 1987, but keep in mind there were 12 NFL draft picks from last year's national collegiate championship team.

Receivers: It would be too much to ask a duplicate performance of last year's receivers, but the 1988 edition of Miami receivers has come close. Defenders have a lot more trouble finding them than QB Walsh does, when he isn't dumping the ball off to Gary. At tight end, ex-defensive player Randy Bethel (4.75) might get the starting nod over Rob Chudzinski (4.8), but just barely. Bethel played well when Chudzinski was hurt but the latter is an excellent possession receiver, who fights hard to make his receptions. Two-time letterman, Dennis Kelleher (4.9), supports and is available if the Hurricanes elect to go with two tight ends.

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Split end Randal Hill (4.35) is the fastest man on the squad yet, he has to share time with Dale Dawkins (4.5). Flanker Andrew Brown (4.55), a former *Parade* High School All-American, is peaking at the right time, and the 'Canes added Pee Wee Smith (4.5), one of the most sought after junior college prospects at this position, and he's a superb alternate. This fleet foursome can keep any secondary busy, thus allowing the tight ends and Gary to pick the softest spots for Walsh's deadly accurate short passing game. A common 'Cane pattern is to set up a defense with the short passes only to find a wideout slicing deep for a quick, long scoring pass.

Tight End

93 *Randy Bethel, 6-3, 240, so.
84 Rob Chudzinski, 6-4, 220, so.
88 **Dennis Kelleher, 6-3, 233, jr.

Split End

3 *Randal Hill, 5-11, 175, so.
11 *Dale Dawkins, 6-1, 194, jr.

Flanker

83 ***Andre Brown, 6-3, 212, sr.
18 Pee Wee Smith, 6-1, 180, jr.

Offensive Line: Not overly large but a well-trained set of good athletes, who can pass block and have exceptional agility and quickness. Three of the four tackles are seniors, led by All-American John O'Neill, but the other tackles are underclassmen. O'Neill, a former

Left Tackle

52 *Darrin Bruce, 6-3, 260, sr.
62 ***Gary Mahon, 6-2, 264, sr.

Left Guard

79 *Mike Sullivan, 6-4, 274, so.
66 Darren Handy, 6-1, 263, so.

Center

50 *Bobby Garcia, 6-3, 253, jr.
66 Darren Handy, 6-1, 263, so.
65 Steve Rosinski, 6-1, 247, jr.

Right Guard

66 Darren Handy, 6-1, 263, so.
68 *Barry Panfil, 6-3, 250, jr.

Right Tackle

75 ***John O'Neill, 6-3, 267, sr.
73 Leon Searcy, 6-3, 275, fr.



Defense, not offense, has turned Miami into a powerhouse.

schoolboy state heavyweight wrestling champion, sets up on the right side, while talented freshman Leon Searcy is learning the ropes. At left tackle, former basketballer Darrin Bruce (4.85) and Gary Mahon (5.0), handle the chores in admirable form.

The starting guards, Darren Handy (4.85) and Mike Sullivan (5.0), are quick, stout and adept at pulling to block or picking up blitzing linebackers. If Miami has a lack of depth anywhere, it might be in the middle of the offensive line. Barry Panfil (5.0) supports Handy, but the marvelously talented Handy will backup at left guard and center, if necessary. Handy is quick enough considering he moved to the offensive line from fullback.

Center Bobby Garcia (4.9) runs well and makes the offensive wall solid all the way across. Garcia's replacement, Rod Holder, suffered a disabling knee injury in the Michigan game which required major surgery, so he's out of the bowl picture. Junior Steve Rosinski has moved up at center but still is listed behind Handy on the depth chart. As a

group, they protect Walsh with outstanding effectiveness.

Kicking Game: Freshman walk-on Carlos Huerta, who won the Michigan and Arkansas games with last-moment field goals, has been "the find" of the 1988 season. He rooted out letterman Edgar Benes for the point-making job. Huerta has accurate range up to 50 yards and in high school his nickname was "Ice Man." Benes has been relegated to kickoff chores and does the job more than adequately. Junior college transfer Tim Kalal is a power punter. He hammered two into the wind against Arkansas for nearly 50 yards. The snapback job belongs to Mike Azer and he fires bullets. A solid kicking game has been a trademark for Coach Jimmy Johnson. ■

MIAMI (10-1)

31	Florida State	6
31	at Michigan	30
23	Wisconsin	3
55	Missouri	0
30	at Notre Dame	31
57	Cincinnati	3
31	at East Carolina	7
34	Tulsa	3
44	at Louisiana State	3
18	Arkansas	16
41	Brigham Young	17

HUSKER/HURRICANE SERIES

1984	Miami	31-30
1976	Nebraska	17-9
1975	Nebraska	31-16
1962	Nebraska	36-34
1953	Nebraska	20-16
1951	Miami	19-7

MIAMI RECORD IN BOWLS

(Won 7, Lost 9)

Year	Bowl	Score
1988	Orange	Miami 20, Oklahoma 14
1987	Fiesta	Penn State 14, Miami 10
1986	Sugar	Tennessee 35, Miami 7
1985	Fiesta	UCLA 39, Miami 37
1984	Orange	Miami 31, Nebraska 30
1981	Peach	Miami 20, Virg. Tech 10
1967	Blue-bonnet	Colorado 31, Miami 21
1966	Liberty	Miami 14, Virg. Tech 7
1962	Gotham	Nebraska 36, Miami 34
1961	Liberty	Syracuse 15, Miami 14
1952	Gator	Miami 14, Clemson 0
1951	Orange	Clemson 15, Miami 14
1946	Orange	Miami 13, Holy Cross 6
1935	Orange	Bucknell 26, Miami 0
1934	Palm	Duquesne 33, Miami 7
1933	Palm	Miami 7, Manhattan 0

Miami's Home-Field Advantage

Should a college team, as a reward for a championship season, find itself playing the home team in a bowl game? And, more importantly, does that home-field edge even have an effect on the players?

These questions have been bouncing around Nebraska since the Huskers clinched a berth opposite Miami in the Orange Bowl with its victory over Oklahoma.

Some fans claim it's an unfair advantage for the Hurricanes. Others go so far as to suggest the NCAA should legislate against such scheduling.

Nebraska fans, though, have almost become accustomed to this type of post-season arrangement. In three of the past six bowl games, the Huskers have played a "home" team, no matter what the scoreboard read.

After the 1983 season, NU met the Hurricanes in Miami in a classic battle for the national championship, losing heroically, 31-30.

Then in both the 1985 and 1987 Sugar Bowls, the Huskers faced LSU, which traveled all of 90 minutes from its campus to play the game. Nebraska beat the Tigers and their legendary noise-machine fans by scores of 28-10 in 1985 and 30-15 in 1987.

Looking back further, the Huskers met Arizona State on its home field in the 1975 Fiesta Bowl, dropping a 17-14 decision. So, Nebraska stands 2-2 in these types of situations.

But does it really hurt the players? The only way to find out is to ask.

Quarterback Turner Gill was the leader of Nebraska's high-powered attack in 1983, and he said that where the game was played was not all that important at the time.

"We were so confident going into that game that we didn't care where it was played," Gill said recently. "We thought we could score at will and beat anyone. But looking back on it, I wish we had played on a neutral site."



Did playing at home help Miami win in 1984? Probably.

Offensive guard Dean Steinkuhler remembered the game atmosphere wasn't like other bowl games. "It was a tough situation for many reasons," he said. "The crowd was loud, and that definitely helped keep them (the Hurricanes) fired up when we kept coming back on them. In all fairness, I think bowl games should be on neutral sites."

While the crowd was a factor, both former Huskers mentioned other points.

"The field and the weather really bothered me," Gill said. "The field was like sand. They (the Hurricanes) were used to playing on it, but we were used to artificial turf. Guys like Mike (Rozier), Irving (Fryar) and myself used the good footing on artificial turf to make people miss us, but that was all gone when we played down there. The Miami guys seemed to always swarm to the ball, while we had a tough time getting a good grip on the field."

"Plus, we were having a tough time practicing in Lincoln because of the cold weather, and we even went down there early. But no matter how long we could have practiced, it was a real advantage for them to have us coming from a cold-weather area."

"They were used to the heat and humidity, and we weren't," Steinkuhler added. "We tried to get used to it, but there wasn't enough

time."

However, Gill was quick to say the weather advantage isn't limited to the Orange Bowl. "In any bowl situation, being in the winter, it's always a disadvantage to play a warm-weather team that's used to heat while you've been playing in cold," he said.

Gill mentioned that the 1983 Huskers had one other advantage over this year's team.

"When we played Miami, it was our third year in a row down there," the All-Big Eight quarterback explained. "We were used to being there, and it wasn't as big a deal as it will be for the guys this year. They've never been to an Orange Bowl and will want to go out and see as much and do as much as they can. But they (the Hurricanes) live there. They're at home. It's no big deal, so they don't have the kinds of distractions that the visiting team has."

"Coach (Tom) Osborne and the staff will have a tough time keeping the players' heads in the game."

"Looking at it now, I'd say that I'd like to see bowl games played at truly neutral sites, but then again, it's not always that easy to arrange."

Former Oklahoma running back Spencer Tillman, who is now a Houston Oiler teammate with Steinkuhler, Rozier and former Husker tight end Jamie Williams, thinks the field is not as important as the players on it. He and the Sooners faced Miami in two regular-season games, one in Norman, one in Miami.

"When you talk about Miami, I don't think it matters where they play," said Tillman. "They have a your-place-or-mine attitude. They came to our place and beat us as bad as they did at their place. The Orange Bowl stadium is hardly ever sold out in the regular season, so I don't think it holds any special hex over an opponent. They just have a confident group of athletes." ■

By Chuck Pool

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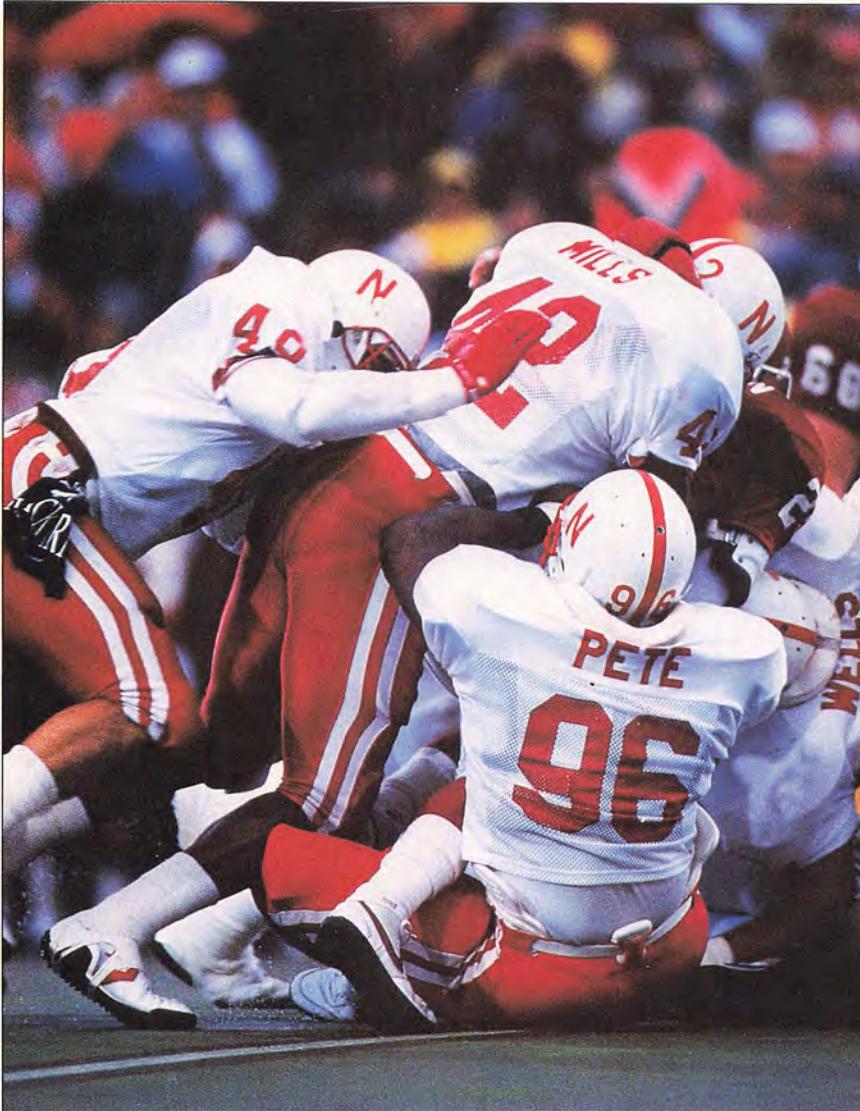
STEADILY IMPROVING NEBRASKA, NEW BIG EIGHT CHAMP, BEAT OKLAHOMA AT ITS OWN FOURTH-QUARTER GAME.

NORMAN, Okla. — "Amazing," said Charlie McBride. "Simply amazing." Nebraska's Defensive Coordinator wasn't talking about the 1969 New York Mets or the 1984 U.S. Olympic hockey team or even the gap between Mike Tyson's two front teeth. McBride was talking about something more incredible — Nebraska's recent improvement on both offense and defense. Against Oklahoma, it was the kind of improvement that screamed for attention as the Cornhuskers won a trip to the Orange Bowl and saved a 1988 football season that was on the brink of disappointment by beating the Sooners in a 7-3 rout.

Seemingly everyone's fourth-quarter whipping boy when it comes to OU, Nebraska used the upper-body strength of defensive tackles Willie Griffin and Kent Wells plus noseguard Lawrence Pete to shrug off that image and dominate the final period. Oklahoma ran 13 plays in that decisive final quarter, but the Black Shirts inflicted 11 yards in losses upon a Sooner team that ran for an NCAA-record 768 yards against Kansas State in October. The Sooners didn't make a single fourth-quarter first down.

Sure, Nebraska's offense was held to only seven points by the Sooners for the fifth year in a row, but that was largely because the Huskers stopped themselves. Nebraska's score might have been the same as recent NU-OU games, but this shootout for the Big Eight championship was different. Much different.

Leading to this traditionally hyped game, the national media gave NU-OU second and even third billing behind glitzy matchups this day between UCLA-Southern Cal and Miami-LSU and Notre Dame-Penn State. Nebraska was a modest No. 7 while Oklahoma ranked No. 9, a far cry from 1987's



Defense was Nebraska's fourth-quarter magic.



NU dominated early, but mistakes kept the score close.

No. 1 versus No. 2 circus.

"I think the lack of TV exposure hurt us a little," said Husker strong safety Reggie Cooper, surprised by the Huskers slow rise in the rankings after rebounding from the UCLA loss in September. "We lost on TV in a strange game and then didn't get back on TV much at all until now. I guess the poll voters just kept thinking about UCLA and didn't realize we were improving every week."

In fact, while Husker players got better the rankings got worse. Nebraska dropped from No. 2 to No. 11 in the Associated Press poll after UCLA. NU climbed to No. 5 in late-October but fell to seventh after stomping Iowa State, while West Virginia stayed unbeaten and Florida State didn't play.

Miffed by the sag, Coach Tom Osborne wondered aloud, "Maybe we should take the week off like Florida State. Who knows, we might move up a notch or two." Usually, a once-beaten Nebraska, winningest college team in

the '80s, would get top 5 respect in November polls, but '88 has been unusual. Unbeaten teams abounded. Gorilla-tough Florida State and Miami were once-beaten but ranked higher than NU. Overcoming the UCLA loss was a chore.

But OU wasn't any better off. The Sooners had lost to USC in spectacular fashion (23-7 in September) and dropped from third to 10th. Although Oklahoma would redeem itself with seven straight wins, the Sooners' reward for two months of improvement was a measly one-notch jump in the polls.

Battle cry for the Big Reds was a yawn.

"I felt good about that," said McBride. "Our players had fewer distractions. It was a nightmare in 1987 when we had two weeks of hype, and the press was after us all the time. This year, we could concentrate on the game."

And what Barry Switzer said.
Switzer, college football's winningest

active coach, spoke twice too often as he got burned with two quotes that got the Huskers bug-eyed. First, he claimed NU was "The Steve Taylor Show" and that if Taylor faltered so would the Husker offense. Then, the quotable Sooner coach said the Black Shirt linemen weren't physical, and that his front line was definitely the Big Eight's best.

Switzer found himself in a catch 22. Even faithful Husker fans might have agreed with him. After all, Osborne had said early in the year that NU's front wall needed to improve and that Taylor was an integral part of the offense. But that was *early* in the year, before the line and I-back Ken Clark blossomed. Perhaps those quotes just sounded different coming from Switzer. That was the catch. And anything with a catch to it is bad news for the wishboning Sooners.

Right away Clark proved Nebraska's offense was more than "The Steve Taylor Show."

With 30 m.p.h. gusts blowing into his

face, Clark sprinted 33 yards down the right sideline on the third play from scrimmage to ignite the Huskers' opening drive. Starting from its 20, Nebraska marched 80 yards for the game's only touchdown.

Certainly, Taylor was no slouch. He converted third-and-13 from the Sooner 41 with a 30-yard pass to wingback Richard Bell. Taylor, in fact, snuck in from the 1 for the TD. Call it "The Steve and Ken Show."

Clark would finish with 167 yards rushing on 24 attempts, the most by a Husker against OU since 1983 when Mike Rozier pounded for 205. Taylor was almost as busy, gaining 67 yards on 21 carries. His totals would have been more impressive had Taylor not repeatedly lost yardage in the waning minutes trying to run out the clock. Until then, Taylor had 74 yards on 17 carries (4.4 yards per rush).

And the Husker point total would have been more impressive if it weren't for mistakes that sullied an otherwise dynamic offensive effort.

On NU's second possession of the game, a holding penalty bogged down a drive that went from the Husker 42 to the Sooner 7. Instead of having first-and-goal from the 7, Nebraska faced third-and-12 and couldn't convert. Gregg Barrios' 41-yard field goal kick slogged its way through drizzly wind, wide left.

That holding call negated perhaps the game's most impressive athletic display. Taylor had scrambled out of the pocket at midfield with Oklahoma's impressive defensive end James Goode in pursuit. Considered one of OU's fastest ends ever, Goode was within inches of sacking Taylor. Instead, Taylor kicked up a rooster tail of raindrops behind him as he escaped for 18 yards.

Later in the first half, the Husker offense would reach the Sooner 45, 19 and 35 only to have those drives killed by a penalty, interception and incompletion.

The 7-0 Husker lead was the same as the halftime score of 1987. The same, yet different. Oklahoma statistically dominated the first half in '87, and only fumbles kept the Sooners from dominating the scoreboard. This year, however, Nebraska dominated. NU led in first downs, 10-3; rushing yards, 171-57; to-



Ken Clark (32) rambled for 167 yards.

tal offense, 219-83; and time of possession, 18:38 to 11:22, with "The Ken and Steve Show" accounting for 202 of those 219 yards in total offense. Clark had 103 yards rushing at the half.

Without question, the offense played well, especially in the first half, but what made this game teeter on the edge of being a runaway was defense.

Call it, "The Black Shirt Show."

After giving up 41 points to UCLA and 42 to Oklahoma State, the Black Shirts were the Rodney Dangerfield of college football — no respect.

"We all heard it and read it," McBride said of the criticism. "But, you know, my philosophy's always been that when people say things like that about you, they're challenging you to a fight. Sure, it can be discouraging. We've taken some raps, and this has probably been the toughest year I've had as a coach because of it. But we stuck together. The kids stuck together and worked hard. If you feel sorry for yourself, you can forget it."

Critics must have forgotten that Nebraska entered this game ranked 12th

nationally in total defense. Oklahoma, on the other hand, was 32nd.

Osborne also felt the knocks were unjustified. "People have said we're not as good as last year, but I haven't had that demonstrated to me," he said before the game. "I've said all along, we're improving, especially on defense."

If critics had only asked him, McBride would have explained it.

"There's just no way," McBride said emphatically, "that this year's defensive line is the same as last year's. We're *much* stronger this year. It's not even close. Neil Smith was great because of his speed. Tim Rother also had a lot of power in his legs. The guys this year all have great upper-body strength. Willie (Griffin) just flat stuffs people. Lawrence (Pete) has come on to play better than we ever expected. And (Kent) Wells has simply played himself into great form. He just needed time."

"The Black Shirt Show," however, featured many stars. It could just as easily have been "The Kent, Willie, Lawrence, Broderick, Jeff, LeRoy, Chris, Charles, Lorenzo, Reggie and Tim Show." The Husker defense glided. It pounded.

The Black Shirts administered a thrashing to the proud wishbone, limiting OU to just 98 yards rushing and 39 passing. That was the lowest total offense output for Oklahoma in 12 years. Nebraska made 14 tackles behind the line. Oklahoma's bullish fullbacks managed but 22 yards. On eight of 12 possessions, the Sooners waltzed, 1-2-3-kick. Only once did the Black Shirts give up more than a single first down on any Sooner drive. On that occasion, in the third quarter, they gave up two. Switzer would agree afterwards, this was the offensive low-point of his wishbone era.

The game, in fact, turned in the third quarter.

Seemingly on the ropes, Oklahoma started the third quarter by marching to the NU 37, only to have a penalty and 4-yard sack by linebacker LeRoy Etienne stall the drive at midfield. Switzer's young team punted but still had shown more offensive clout than at any other time.

Switzer said the Tuesday before, his

continued on page 21

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PLAYER OF THE WEEK

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The Black Shirts were too good for their own good; that was a good sign.

Nebraska's defensive effort against Oklahoma was so consistent and thorough that no single player stood out as a star. "After looking at films, I can honestly say that all the starters played well," said Charlie McBride, NU defen-

sive coordinator. "We got solid play all game long. We didn't have many breakdowns, we hardly ever missed a tackle and it seemed like almost every guy out there made a big play at one time or another."

For their collective effort, the Black Shirts are this week's Players of the

Game.

Oklahoma was held to eight first downs and 137 yards in total offense, far below its seasonal average. The longest Sooner runs of the day were all on scrambles or quarterback draws. The conventional wishbone simply could not move on the Black Shirts.

Of course, the defensive line trio of Willie Griffin, Lawrence Pete and Kent Wells was a force, especially when those hulksters dismantled OU's rally attempts in the fourth quarter.

But the linebackers also played well. Broderick Thomas, LeRoy Etienne, Chris Caliendo and Jeff Mills helped shut down OU's fullback option with only 22 yards rushing. They also caused havoc with well-timed blitzes. Of course, the quarterback and halfback options were hardly a factor.

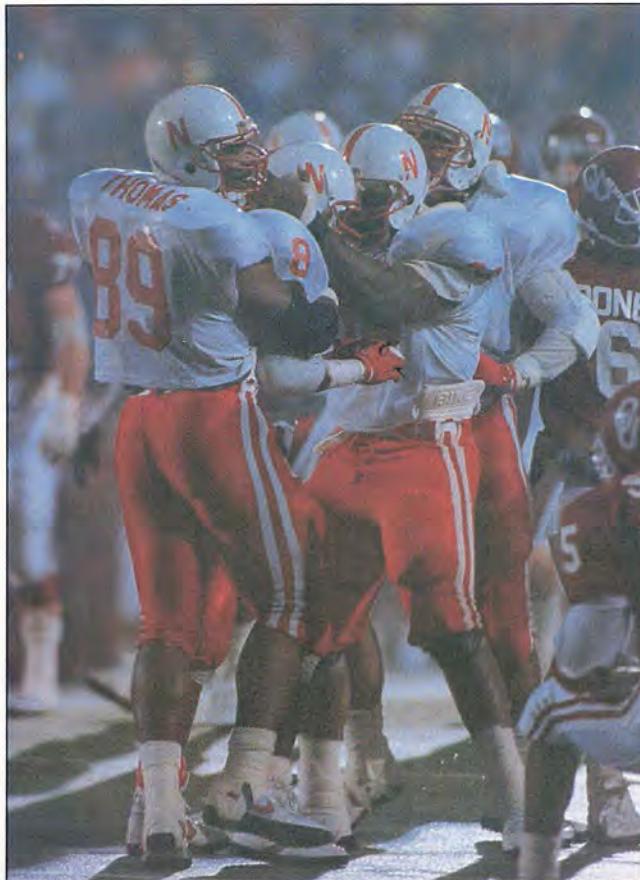
Partly responsible for that were NU's defensive backs, in particular the safeties. Free safety Tim Jackson and strong safety Reggie Cooper were busy all day fighting off perimeter blocks to crash through Oklahoma's second option.

Cornerbacks Lorenzo Hicks and Charles Fryar were also instrumental in stuffing the outside game.

"I'm happiest for the kids," McBride said afterwards. "Sure, it was nice for us as coaches to win, but the real payoff was seeing the kids' faces in the dressing room when it was over."

Omaha-based corporate giant ConAgra honored the defensive unit with a \$21,000 donation to the football program. ■

Thomas and
crew
celebrate the
end of Sooner
domination.



continued from page 19

team would need all the cheering, yelling and support that Sooner fans could muster, and that enthusiasm steadily increased during the third period, as Switzer appeared again to be writing one of his come-from-behind scripts.

OU's defense forced a punt, and the wishbone was on the grind again, only this time with I-formation thrusts. Still pinned deep in their own territory, the Sooners slowly marched upfield, thanks in large part to a 28-yard completion from OU quarterback Charles Thompson to split end Artie Guess. Moments later, Oklahoma was at the Huskers' 35, where Thompson dropped back and threw for the end zone. However, cornerback Lorenzo Hicks stepped in front of the intended receiver to kill that drive, which would be resurrected from the dead only moments later when the Huskers suffered yet another self-inflicted bullet wound to the foot.

Starting from its 3, Nebraska sent Clark up the middle into the kind of gaping hole that the offensive line had been making most of the day. But at the 15, he was hit from behind and fumbled upfield where OU recovered at the Husker 30.

Oklahoma would generate one first down and reach as far as the NU 12, but Pete engulfed fullback Rotnei Anderson a yard short on third down, and OU settled for a 29-yard field goal with 1:03 left in the third period. Despite trailing

**Tim Jackson
and the Husker
DBs popped
the option.**



7-3, the Sooners had momentum.

Did they ever. With the third stanza almost over, Oklahoma had controlled the ball for 11:29 compared to only 2:28 for Nebraska.

The ensuing kickoff gave Nebraska lousy field position, at the Husker 16.

Then the game changed.

In fact, there was probably no more important drive in the game than the one

that followed. Nebraska would not score a point or even seriously threaten to score, but this drive, which spanned the end of the third quarter and early parts of the fourth period, put the Huskers in position to wrestle that fourth-quarter monkey off their backs.

Nebraska hammered away with a 10-play drive, all on the ground except for one incomplete pass. Although they

SEASON RECAP	8/27 A&M	9/3 USU	9/10 UCLA	9/24 ASU	10/1 UNLV	10/8 KU	10/15 OSU	10/22 KSU	10/29 MU	11/5 ISU	11/12 CU	11/9 OU	BOWL	SEASON AVERAGE
First Downs	19	34	21	29	26	38	28	32	9	29	16	13		24
Yards Rushing	201	421	260	441	444	547	570	479	116	566	278	265		382
Yards Passing	125	169	125	29	56	118	92	143	153	71	18	48		96
Fumbles - Lost	5-3	0-0	2-1	2-0	1-0	1-0	0-0	1-1	7-3	3-1	3-2	1-1		2-1
Time of Possession	60%	54%	44%	57%	59%	54%	53%	65%	48%	53%	51%	51%		54%
Third Down Conversions	50%	50%	46%	45%	56%	40%	58%	63%	15%	69%	17%	38%		45%
Final Score	23-14	63-14	28-41	47-16	48-6	63-10	63-42	48-3	26-18	51-16	7-0	7-3		39-15

stalled and punted at the OU 36, the Huskers had enjoyed a three and a half minute march that put the field-position onus on Oklahoma's back. John Kroeker's punt went in the end zone, and OU started from its 20 still trailing 7-3, with 12:36 left in the infamous fourth quarter.

"The fourth quarter," said Etienne, "was going to be ours."

The Black Shirts made sure of that.

Wells, Hicks and outside linebacker Jeff Mills then inflicted consecutive sacks behind the line, and OU punted from its 8. The next two Sooner drives started and ended deep in OU territory, and Nebraska had only one last challenge to meet.

With 1:45 left, Kroeker's seventh punt of the game was tipped and OU recovered at the Husker 48. Again rising to the occasion, the Black Shirts, to use

Osborne's post-game terminology, stuffed 'em. Griffin sacked Thompson for a 1-yard loss on fourth down to seal the win, although the moment was saddened when Thompson suffered a broken leg on OU's 56th and last offensive play of the game.

After four losses to Oklahoma, the Huskers were Miami-bound.

A Memorial Stadium security guard said before kickoff he was confident no fans could reach the field and tear down goal posts following a Sooner win because of the 80-man army that was assigned to protect the field. He hadn't considered a Nebraska win. Several thousand NU fans swarmed the field at the final gun. Restraint ropes gave way like cheap thread.

Etienne dropped to his knees in thankful prayer with tears in his eyes. Other Huskers lingered on the field. CBS-TV honored the Black Shirts as its Player of the Game.

It was an inspirational win.

"Gee," said Mike Harper, "the whole defense needs to be recognized." Harper, down-to-earth chairman of corporate giant ConAgra, had been "watching the tube" with wife Josie back in Nebraska and felt his Omaha-based company should honor the Black Shirt effort. Within days of the victory, ConAgra donated \$21,000 to the football program in recognition of the 21 defensive players who saw action.

"Gee," said Athletic Director Bob Devaney, "I was surprised. We've never had anything like this happen before." Well, ConAgra had never done anything like that before.

Had the Black Shirts ever done anything like that before?

"You might have to go back as far as the Alabama game in the 1972 Orange Bowl," Devaney said as he tried to think of a defensive effort of equal stature. Nebraska squashed the unbeaten Tide, 38-6, to win its second national championship.

"Every defensive starter played a heck of a game," said McBride. "Our concentration was great. We only had three or four missed tackles the whole game. That's amazing."

The Nebraska-Oklahoma clash of 1988, like the 1972 Orange Bowl, was amazing. Simply amazing. ■



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Honorable Mention to Stubborn Offensive Line

While bountiful and deserving praise has been heaped on the Cornhusker defense for its performance in the 7-3, rain-storm verdict over Oklahoma, which landed the Huskers in the Orange Bowl against mighty Miami, there was an inconspicuous, non-scoring Husker offensive thrust early in the fourth quarter which might have sealed the demise of the Sooners.

Admittedly, after frittering away two glowing offensive chances in the first half, the Huskers endured a down-wind third period which saw the Sooners keep the ball 11:29 of the first 13 minutes of the quarter. OU couldn't have written a better script to help its chances, especially after R.D. Lashar booted a 29-yard field goal with just 90 seconds left in the third stanza.

The ensuing kickoff wasn't encouraging either when Dana Brinson was forced to fall helplessly on a squib-kicked ball at the Nebraska 16 yard line. Knowing that in shortly over a minute they were going to have to punt into that wind and rain unless possession of the ball could be maintained, the Huskers "sucked it up" and put together their most important field position drive of the entire season.

During the next four minutes of clock time, Nebraska drove 48 yards in 10 plays from its own 16 to the Sooner 36 yard stripe, where John Kroeker wisely punted the ball into the OU end zone. Maybe the Husker faithful didn't realize the importance of this stubborn march at the time, but you can believe the Sooners did.

On their next three possessions, the Sooners started from their 20-, 7- and 28-yard lines when they originally expected to get these three separate shots from around midfield to win this title game. This bad field position restricted OU to three consecutive series of three-plays-and-punt before the partially blocked Husker punt caused some hair-raising moments in the final 41 seconds.

That deflected punt was to be

OU's only fourth period penetration into Husker territory and all because of the unyielding stubbornness of the Nebraska offensive line.

All-American and All-Conference labels have been tossed around when earlier *Huskers Illustrated* articles focused on center Jake Young, tackle Bob Sledge and guard Andy Keeler. Doug "Right Mountain" Glaser is the blooming "All" candidate for 1989 and this left stubby senior John Nelson to put on one of his best performances of the season against the Sooners.

Nelson, a 6-foot-1 by 260-pounder who started his career at Nebraska as a walkon, had numerous "knock downs" on kick-out blocks against the Sooners and more than held his own on heads-up blocking against his larger opponents.

"In OU's defensive concept against us, their defensive ends try to make us block out on them," Nelson says. "We don't see this very often but our coaches hit it right on the nose for this game and we were ready for it. I guess I was just lucky to clear my pulling assignments and stiff the guy so Kenny (Clark) could cut upfield under the block."

Was this something new in the Husker offensive package?

"No, not really, but if we hadn't been prepared to see this kind of stuff, it would have made it more difficult," Nelson said from his Lincoln home as he and his wife, Megan, were preparing a beef stroganoff supper for friends and offensive line teammates, Young and Glaser.

"Really, our main theory during the practice week was to go full blast and not be tentative with these guys," Nelson claims. "Even if we screwed up, we were going to screw up 100 percent!"

Nelson remembered the early fourth quarter predicament, adding, "Anytime you feel the wind and rain in your face, you know there's going to be a lot of stress on your

running game. That early fourth quarter drive did a lot for us."

Nelson, who spends what precious spare time he gets reading horror books, probably had a great role in saving the entire state of Nebraska the agony of having to read and re-read a horror story they've endured over the past three seasons against OU.

Offensive Line Coach Milt Tenipor claims, "John has been a steady player all year long and against OU he did a good job on his pull blocks. It was also very critical that he held up well enough on those one-on-one blocks.

"Oh, yes, the drive impressed me at the time, but it could've gone on further if Tyreese (Knox) had run under the block instead of over it on our last third-down try of that drive."

But the drive was vintage Nelson. His relentless pursuit of an athletic grant was finally rewarded at the start of his fifth semester at Lincoln. Then the following spring he "blew out" his right knee and required complete restructuring surgery to return to practice.

While he pushed on in football both he and his wife, the former Megan Felzin of Minden, pursued academic excellence, too. John completes a double major in management and finance this semester and he maintains 3.5 grades. Megan, a dietetics major, does even better than her husband with a 3.8 GPA.

What about pro football? Nelson politely but quickly says, "No! I've had my fill. It's been fun and the Orange Bowl is a pretty nice way to bow out."

Nelson has nothing but respect for Miami but doesn't feel intimidated by the illustrious Hurricane record, saying, "Oh, no, we won't be intimidated. You never approach a game like that."

"We know they're good, very good. But we've played against quality athletes and we have some of those kind of athletes, too." ■

By Pat Quinn

STATISTICS

RUSHING

	Texas A&M	Utah St.	UCLA	Arizona St.	UNLV	Kansas	Oklahoma St.	Kansas St.	Missouri	Iowa St.	Colorado	Oklahoma	Total
Clark	20-80-1-4.0	12-90-1-7.5	12-46-0-3.8	22-122-1-5.5	14-79-3-5.6	10-64-0-6.4	27-256-3-9.5	20-225-1-11.3	23-57-0-2.5	20-146-1-7.3	28-165-1-5.9	24-167-0-6.9	232-1497-12-6.5
Taylor	18-34-0-1.9	9-74-2-8.2	14-95-1-6.8	17-116-1-6.8	11-67-0-6.1	8-43-2-5.4	11-140-3-12.7	11-34-0-3.1	13-(38)-0-(2.9)	12-154-3-12.8	12-40-0-3.3	21-67-1-3.2	157-826-13-5.3
Carpenter	3-4-0-1.3	4-30-0-7.5	5-47-0-9.4	7-26-0-3.7	5-59-1-11.8	2-33-1-16.5	7-76-0-10.8	6-18-0-3.0	12-96-1-8.0	6-40-0-6.7	6-40-0	5-25-0-5.0	72-498-3-6.9
Knox	5-50-0-10.0	3-8-0-2.7	4-26-0-6.5	8-57-0-7.1	6-120-1-20.0	10-53-0-5.3	19-108-4-5.7	2-4-1-2.0	10-44-0-4.4	3-18-0-6.0	2-2-0-1.0	72-490-6-6.8	
Rodgers	10-65-0-5.5	7-19-1-2.7	2-12-0-6.0	13-113-1-8.7	11-50-1-4.5								43-259-3-6.0
Joseph	3-34-1-11.3		2-15-1-7.5	1-22-0-22.0	12-77-1-6.4			2-23-0-11.5		4-44-0-11.0			24-215-3-9.0
Flowers	3-18-0-6.0		2-14-0-7.0	3-37-0-12.3	13-80-1-6.1			8-41-0-5.1		3-12-1-4.0			32-202-2-6.3
Gdowski	6-40-1-6.7		1-(2)-0-(2.0)	1-19-0-19.0	5-42-0-8.4					4-56-1-14.0			17-155-2-9.1
Lewis	4-15-0-3.8	1-9-0-9.0	2-1-0-0.5	3-16-0-5.3	10-50-1-5.0	2-5-0-2.5	3-18-0-6.0		4-18-0-4.5				29-132-1-4.6
Bell	1-(5)-0-(5.0)			1-(4)-0-(4.5)	4-33-0-8.3	1-38-0-38.0			4-40-0-10.0	2-11-0-5.5	1-3-0-3.0	14-116-0-8.3	

(Legend: Attempts-Yards-TDs-Average)

PASSING

	Texas A&M	Utah St.	UCLA	Arizona St.	UNLV	Kansas	Oklahoma St.	Kansas St.	Missouri	Iowa St.	Colorado	Oklahoma	Total
Taylor	22-11-0-125-1	10-7-0-143-1	29-14-3-125-2	10-3-1-29-1	10-6-0-56-0	9-7-0-78-1	11-6-1-92-2	11-6-0-129-1	9-3-0-153-1	9-5-0-71-1	9-2-0-18-0	12-2-2-48-0	151-72-7-1067-11
Gdowski	3-2-0-19-1					3-2-0-31-0		1-1-0-14-0		1-0-0-0-0			8-5-0-64-1
Joseph	1-1-0-7-0					2-1-1-9-0		1-0-1-0-0					4-2-2-16-0

(Legend: Attempts-Completions-Interceptions-Yards-TDs)

RECEIVING

	Texas A&M	Utah St.	UCLA	Arizona St.	UNLV	Kansas	Oklahoma St.	Kansas St.	Missouri	Iowa St.	Colorado	Oklahoma	Total
Gregory	4-44-0	1-13-0	5-57-1	3-29-1	2-21-0	1-11-0	2-32-0		1-12-0	1-20-0			20-239-2
Milliken	2-33-1	1-8-0	2-8-1			3-57-1	3-52-2	2-52-0	1-82-1	1-6-1	1-9-0		16-308-7
Brinson	1-8-0	1-34-0	3-15-0		3-28-0		1-8-0	2-55-1					11-148-1
Bell	1-9-0	3-77-1	1-17-0			2-26-0					2-48-0		9-177-1
Turner	2-23-0		1-5-0		1-7-0	1-9-0		1-19-0	1-59-0	1-28-0			8-150-0

(Legend: Catches-Yards-TDs)

TACKLES — LINEMEN

	Texas A&M	Utah St.	UCLA	Arizona St.	UNLV	Kansas	Oklahoma St.	Kansas St.	Missouri	Iowa St.	Colorado	Oklahoma	Total
Pete	2-0-2; 1-8	5-0-5; 0-0	3-2-5; 1-12	2-1-3; 0-0	1-2-3; 0-0	3-2-5; 0-0			5-5-10; 2-11	2-1-3; 1-6	5-5-10; 1-2	5-4-9; 1-5	33-22-55; 7-44
Griffin	3-1-4; 0-0	2-1-3; 1-1	3-2-5; 0-0	4-1-5; 1-1	3-1-4; 0-0	1-1-2; 0-0	5-1-6; 2-11	1-0-1; 0-0	4-2-6; 1-6	0-2-2; 0-0	3-0-3; 0-0	4-2-6; 2-2	33-14-17; 7-21
Wells	0-1-1; 0-0	0-1-1; 0-0	0-1-1; 0-0	1-1-2; 1-4	1-1-2; 0-0	0-3-3; 1-4	3-2-5; 0-0	1-2-3; 1-8	5-2-7; 0-0	1-2-3; 1-7	4-2-6; 0-0	3-1-4; 3-16	19-19-38; 7-39
Brunsgardt	1-1-2; 1-7	1-1-2; 0-0	6-0-6; 0-0	1-1-2; 0-0		1-1-2; 1-1				1-2-3; 1-4			11-6-17; 3-12
Murray	3-1-4; 1-1	2-2-4; 0-0		0-1-1; 0-0		0-1-1; 0-0				0-1-1; 0-0			5-6-11; 1-1
Sims				0-2-2; 0-0	1-0-1; 1-8	0-1-1; 0-0		0-1-1; 0-0		2-1-3; 1-3		0-1-1; 0-0	3-6-9; 2-11
Monarrez	0-1-1; 0-0	0-1-1; 0-0		1-0-1; 0-0	0-2-2; 0-0					0-3-3; 0-0			1-7-8; 0-0

(Legend: Unassisted tackles-Assisted tackles-Total tackles; Tackles for loss-Yards lost)

TACKLES — LINEBACKERS

	Texas A&M	Utah St.	UCLA	Arizona St.	UNLV	Kansas	Oklahoma St.	Kansas St.	Missouri	Iowa St.	Colorado	Oklahoma	Total
Thomas	6-8-14; 1-1	5-2-7; 3-23	8-3-11; 1-4	5-5-10; 1-2	3-1-4; 1-14	2-6-8; 1-2	4-4-8; 0-0	1-2-3; 1-7	5-4-9; 1-9	5-2-7; 2-12	4-5-9; 1-19	5-3-8; 4-18	53-45-98; 17-111
Etienne	6-5-11; 1-1	3-1-4; 0-0	8-1-9; 0-0	5-2-7; 0-0		3-3-6; 0-0	6-2-8; 1-4	1-3-4; 1-5	3-3-6; 1-4	5-5-10; 1-1	6-2-8; 0-0	6-0-6; 3-20	52-27-79; 8-35
Caliendo	1-0-1; 0-0		1-1-2; 0-0	3-0-3; 0-0	4-1-5; 0-0	3-5-8; 0-0	4-0-4; 0-0	10-2-12; 1-1	1-4-5; 0-0	3-5-8; 0-0	4-1-5; 0-0		34-19-53; 1-1
Mills	4-2-6; 0-0	0-1-1; 0-0	1-1-2; 1-5	2-1-3; 1-2	1-1-2; 0-0	3-4-7; 1-4	2-1-3; 0-0	3-2-5; 0-0	2-3-5; 0-0	1-4-5; 1-2	3-3-6; 0-0	2-3-5; 1-3	24-26-50; 5-16
Tyrance	2-2-4; 0-0	4-1-5; 0-0	6-2-8; 0-0	0-3-3; 0-0	2-0-2; 0-0	0-2-2; 1-4	2-2-4; 0-0	3-1-4; 0-0		0-3-3; 0-0		1-0-1; 0-0	20-16-36; 1-4
Jobman	3-0-3; 0-0	2-1-3; 0-0	3-1-4; 0-0	1-2-3; 0-0	1-2-3; 0-0	1-1-2; 0-0	1-3-4; 0-0	1-2-3; 0-0		2-2-4; 0-0			15-14-29; 0-0
Marco	1-2-3; 0-0	3-2-5; 0-0	2-0-2; 1-1	1-2-3; 0-0	1-2-3; 0-0	1-1-2; 0-0	1-0-1; 1-8	2-1-3; 0-0	1-1-2; 0-0	1-1-2; 0-0			14-12-26; 2-9
Croel	2-0-2; 0-0	2-3-5; 1-6		3-0-3; 0-0	1-0-1; 0-0	2-3-5; 0-0	1-0-1; 0-0	1-0-1; 0-0	1-0-1; 0-0	2-1-3; 1-7			15-7-22; 2-13
Hagge	1-1-2; 0-0		4-0-4; 0-0	1-2-3; 0-0	3-0-3; 0-0	1-0-1; 0-0				1-1-2; 0-0			11-4-15; 0-0

(Legend: Unassisted tackles-Assisted tackles-Total tackles; Tackles for loss-Yards lost)

TACKLES — BACKS

	Texas A&M	Utah St.	UCLA	Arizona St.	UNLV	Kansas	Oklahoma St.	Kansas St.	Missouri	Iowa St.	Colorado	Oklahoma	Total
Cooper	4-4-8; 0-0	5-2-7; 1-0	4-2-6; 0-0	3-2-5; 1-0	3-2-5; 0-0	2-0-2; 0-0	6-4-10; 0-0	3-1-4; 1-1	3-1-4; 1-0	1-1-2; 0-0	0-2-2; 0-0	3-0-3; 0-0	37-21-58; 4-1
Blazek	0-5-5; 0-0	1-1-2; 0-1	4-2-6; 0-1	4-2-6; 0-0	1-1-2; 0-0	0-0-0; 1-0	1-1-2; 0-1	2-2-4; 0-0	1-1-2; 0-0	0-1-1; 0-0	5-5-10; 0-0		19-21-40; 4-3
Jackson	1-1-2; 1-1	1-1-2; 0-0	2-3-5; 1-0	3-1-4; 0-2		2-0-2; 0-0	5-1-6; 0-1	2-0-2; 1-0	3-1-4; 1-0	2-0-2; 0-0	2-1-3; 1-0	4-2-6; 0-0	27-11-38; 5-4
Fryar	3-5-8; 0-1	2-0-2; 0-0	4-0-4; 0-0	1-0-1; 1-0			4-0-4; 1-1	1-0-1; 0-0	9-0-9; 0-0	0-0-0; 1-1	2-1-3; 1-0	1-1-2; 0-0	27-7-34; 4-3
Hicks	2-1-3; 0-0		1-0-1; 0-0	4-0-4; 0-0	3-0-3; 1-0		4-1-5; 1-0			2-0-2; 0-0		2-2-4; 0-0	19-6-25; 3-1
Lewis	2-0-2; 2-0	2-1-3; 1-0	2-2-4; 0-0	1-1-2; 0-0	1-2-3; 1-1	0-1-1; 0-0	2-1-3; 0-0	2-0-2; 0-0					12-8-20; 4-1
Sanders	1-0-1; 0-0	0-1-1; 0-0		1-0-1; 0-0	2-0-2; 0-0	1-3-4; 0-0	1-0-1; 0-0	2-3-5; 1-0	1-0-1; 0-0	1-1-2; 1-0			10-8-18; 2-0
Pickens	1-0-1; 0-0	1-1-2; 1-0		1-1-2; 0-0		2-2-4; 0-0		3-0-3; 0-1		1-1-2; 0-0			9-5-14; 1-1
Custard	1-0-1; 0-0	2-0-2; 0-0			1-0-0; 0-0					2-1-3; 0-0			6-1-7; 0-0

(Legend: Unassisted tackles-Assisted tackles-Total tackles; Pass breakups-Interceptions)

TEAM STATISTICS

	GAME		SEASON			GAME		SEASON	
	NU	OU	NU	OPP		NU	OU	NU	OPP
First downs	13	8	292	174	Total plays	66	56	901	743
First downs rushing	11	6	229	83	Net yards	313	137	5,735	3,153
First downs passing	2	1	49	68	Average gain per play	4.7	2.5	6.4	4.2
First downs penalty	0	1	14	23	Fumbles-lost	1-1	3-0	25-12	28-9
Rushing attempts	54	47	738	461	Penalties-yards	4-36	3-20	82-702	67-530
Yards gained rushing	285	167	4,856	1,939	Interceptions-yards	1-0	2-19	17-328	9-77
Yards lost rushing	20	69	268	404	Punts	7	9	44	80
Net yards rushing	265	98	4,588	1,535	Punt average	32.8	38.1	40.6	38.9
Passing attempts	12	9	163	282	Kickoff returns-yards	1-0	2-39	41-819	59-949
Passes completed	2	3	79	123	Punt returns-yards	3-8	0-0	41-463	20-178
Passes intercepted	2	1	9	16	Possession time	30:49	29:11	32:46	27:14
Net yards passing	48	39	1,147	1,618	3rd down conversions	6-16	2-14	73-153	44-169

FINAL BIG EIGHT CONFERENCE STANDINGS

Team	CONFERENCE GAMES					ALL GAMES						
	Win	Loss	Tie	Pct.	PF	PA	Win	Loss	Tie	Pct.	PF	PA
Nebraska	7	0		1.000	265	92	11	1		.917	474	182
Oklahoma	6	1		.857	235	101	9	2		.818	326	147
Oklahoma State	5	2		.714	317	219	9	2		.818	522	327
Colorado	4	3		.571	181	108	8	3		.727	305	176
Iowa State	3	4		.429	136	183	5	6		.455	195	258
Missouri	2	5		.286	164	195	3	7	1	.318	234	330
Kansas	1	6		.143	122	319	1	10		.091	189	496
Kansas State	0	7		.000	108	311	0	11		.000	171	448

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Mike Babcock

History Repeats Itself

That Nebraska would complete this football season by playing Miami in the Orange Bowl on Jan. 2 was dictated by history, you might say.

Well, if you believe history repeats itself, you might consider...

In 1983, Nebraska played a 12-game regular season, which began with a 44-6 victory over Penn State in the first Kickoff Classic. The Cornhuskers completed that season in the Orange Bowl, their most recent trip there, playing and — this is a whisper — losing (31-30) to Miami.

So it's 1988, the first year Nebraska could make a repeat appearance and the Cornhuskers return to Giants Stadium at the Meadowlands in East Rutherford, N.J., to defeat Texas A&M 23-14 in the sixth annual Kickoff Classic.

And now, they're headed back to the Orange Bowl to play Miami.

Turner Gill was Nebraska's quarterback in 1983. Now, it's Steve Taylor, who's been compared to Gill since the day he signed a letter-of-intent at Lincoln High School in San Diego.

Mike Rozier was Nebraska's I-back in 1983. Now, it's Ken Clark, whose style is often compared to Rozier's.

Coincidence? Or historical imperative?

Okay. So maybe it's stretching the point a little too much to say 1988 is an instant replay of 1983. In one significant way, the seasons are different, dramatically so.

They're totally opposite, in fact.

Got it figured out? Here's a clue which probably gives it away.

Nebraska's 1983 team is generally considered the best offensively in collegiate history. It deserved the nickname: "The Scoring Explosion."

The 1983 Cornhuskers simply out-scored everyone, except Miami, against whom 30 points weren't sufficient to win.

They scored 84 points against Minnesota, 48 points in the third quarter of a 69-19 victory over Colorado, 67 points against Kansas and 72 points against Iowa State.

Offensively, they were remarkable. But defensively, at times, they left something to be desired.

If offense characterized Nebraska's 1983 team, and it obviously did, then defense characterized the 1988 team. Sure, the Cornhuskers had an explosive offense. Ask Oklahoma State, which scored 42 points against Nebraska and still lost by 21. But Nebraska had to rely on defense down the stretch.

And the defense was up to the task.

"How do you win championships? With defense," Cornhusker Defensive Coordinator Charlie McBride told the *Sunday Journal-Star* recently.

That, in a nutshell, is how Nebraska won its first Big Eight championship, outright, since 1983. Defense.

That was the difference.

The 1988 Cornhuskers may not have been the defensive equivalent of 1983's "Scoring Explosion." But at season's end, in victories over Colorado (7-0) and Oklahoma (7-3), the Black Shirts were close.

By then, McBride was willing to use "great" when referring to them.

No one, not even McBride, was using that adjective going into the season. Uncertainty in the interior of the defensive line following the departure of Neil Smith, Tim Rother, and Lee Jones, was cause for concern.

Compare Nebraska's starting lineup on defense for the Kickoff Classic to the one that held Oklahoma to its fewest total yards since 1976. Four very important players, three of them in the defensive line, didn't start. One, middle guard Lawrence Pete, didn't even make the trip to New Jersey.

Pete, you'll recall, had quit the team near the end of spring practice and was still working his way back into shape after being reinstated in the fall.

The other three, of course, were left tackle Willie Griffin, third-string behind Ray Valladao and Joe Sims; right tackle Kent Wells, second-string behind Paul Brungardt; and, weakside linebacker Chris Caliendo, Pat Tyrance's back-up.

The emergence of Pete, Griffin,

Wells, and Caliendo was crucial to the Cornhuskers' success in 1988.

Regardless of what happens against Miami in the Orange Bowl, 1988 will be remembered as the season in which Nebraska finally snapped Oklahoma's wishbone. The Sooners' 137 yards of total offense were the fewest they'd ever had against the Cornhuskers during the Tom Osborne-Bob Devaney era.

The previous low was 201, in a game Oklahoma won 17-7, in 1984.

Who could have guessed Nebraska would do that against the Sooners, who were ranked second in the nation in the United Press International preseason coaches' poll. Going into the Kickoff Classic, probably no one.

Nebraska was ranked third in the UPI preseason poll and second in the Associated Press media poll.

Florida State, which had back most of the team that defeated the Cornhuskers in the 1988 Sunbelt-Fiesta Bowl (31-28), was No. 1 in both.

Expectations were high for the Cornhuskers, who figured to face at least two and maybe three serious challenges during the non-conference schedule — Texas A&M in the Kickoff Classic, UCLA in the Rose Bowl and, possibly, Arizona State at home — and three in conference play — Oklahoma State, Colorado and Oklahoma.

After the loss to UCLA, however, some fans seemed to lower their expectations for 1988 in favor of conjecture regarding the future, 1989.

Prior to the start of Big Eight play, there was talk Nebraska might finish third, behind Oklahoma and either Oklahoma State or Colorado.

For some, this season's conference championship came as a surprise.

Defensively, the play of outside linebacker Broderick Thomas was no surprise, though. Everyone expected Thomas to have an outstanding season, and the senior from Houston didn't disappoint. He was a dominating presence, a near-unanimous choice as Defensive Player of the Year in the Big Eight and consensus All-American.

Jeff Mills, Nebraska's other starting outside linebacker, came into his own, leaving opposing offenses with a rock-and-hard-place quandary.

Strongside linebacker LeRoy Etienne wasn't as consistent as he might have been. But by season's end, he was playing well enough to earn Oklahoma's respect...and All-Big Eight.

At his best, he was as good as any linebacker Nebraska's ever had.

The secondary was solid, and deep.

Sophomore strong safety Reggie Cooper, the only non-senior starter, played like a future All-American.

Right cornerback Charles Fryar and safety Tim Jackson were steady and, at times, spectacular. Left cornerback Lorenzo Hicks battled through injuries to play a key role against Oklahoma.

Senior safety Mark Blazek, a captain, played the entire season despite a severe hamstring pull that would have sidelined someone less determined.

That, of course, was expected.

Offensively, the Cornhuskers' starting lineup was the same for the Oklahoma game as it was for Texas A&M.

However, that doesn't mean there were no surprises on offense.

The biggest, perhaps, was the play of Clark, whose emergence began during spring practice. But even after seeing him play in 11 games, Oklahoma may have underestimated his ability.

Not after he rushed for 167 yards against the Sooners, though, to finish the season with 1,497 yards, the third highest single-season total in school history. Only Rozier did better.

Clark rushed for 100 or more yards in six games, including a career-high 256 yards against Oklahoma State, in a head-to-head showdown with Barry Sanders.

To be honest about it, you'd have to say Clark exceeded expectations, which was particularly important after both Terry Rodgers, the No. 2 I-back, and Sam Schmidt, the starting fullback, were lost for the season with injuries.

The rest of the offense performed at least as well as expected.

Nebraska's first offensive series in the Oklahoma game illustrated the Cornhuskers at their best. They drove 80 yards on nine plays to score.

That drive was representative. The big

plays were a 33-yard run by Clark, on third-and-1 from the Nebraska 29-yard line; a 30-yard pass from Taylor to wingback Richard Bell, on third-and-13 from the Oklahoma 41; and Taylor's 10-yard scramble to the Sooner 1.

The Cornhuskers' play defensively on Oklahoma's final series, following a tipped, 7-yard punt, also represented Nebraska at its best.

On first down from the Nebraska 48, Sooner quarterback Charles Thompson was sacked by Wells for a loss of 8.

On second down, Thompson passed for 3 yards to Eric Bross.

On third down, another Thompson pass intended for Bross was knocked

down by Hicks. And on fourth down, Thompson again was sacked, this time by Griffin, for a 1-yard loss.

If that four-down sequence had been proposed before the season began as the scenario for the conclusion of the Cornhuskers' 11th victory in 12 games, few people would have accepted it.

Likewise, few would have projected a Nebraska-Miami rematch in the Orange Bowl. But that's what will happen.

And maybe history will repeat itself.

Maybe the underdog will prevail, just as it did following the 1983 season. Cornhusker fans would accept that.

This time, the roles are reversed. ■



The Huskers of 1983 and this year's team have a lot in common.

Offense Holds the Key

Rick Thurtle, KDUH, Scottsbluff, Neb.: "This is going to be the best bowl game of the year in my opinion. The Husker defense has played great so far, and that is the key to their success this season. I wouldn't be surprised to see Nebraska win this game 17-14 or 17-10. The Husker 'D' is ready to bust. They are a timebomb that will explode on Miami."

"Don't worry about them being fired up for this game. Broderick Thomas will get the Black Shirts rolling quickly. All the ghosts of 1983 will go away with this big moral victory for the Huskers."

"As for playing in the Orange Bowl, I don't think it will hurt Nebraska at all. They will win this game — there is no doubt in my mind. They have everything to gain and nothing to lose, so they will be playing lights-out. Oklahoma was a great win for the Huskers, and this will be an even greater one. To put it simply, this is the year they're going to do it."

"This was the year I thought Osborne would win the national title. And if it hadn't been for one bad quarter at UCLA, they would be the national champs."

Greg Cote, *Miami Herald*, Miami, Fla.: "When it comes to Miami's success against Oklahoma and the wishbone, the only game plan is lateral speed on defense. Miami recruits speed all the way. You'd assume that game plan will work to a certain degree against Nebraska or any team that runs a lot."

"Conditioning is a big part of Miami's defensive success, too. Jimmy Johnson says about his linebackers, they may run a 4.7 in practice, but they've also got the strength and endurance to still run a 4.7 at the end of the game."

"I think it's fair to say Miami's front seven on defense is outstanding, while the secondary is a notch below — still very good, but a notch below. They don't have the single, dominating player in the secondary like they did with Bennie Blades, and people seem to overlook them because of that. But the corners are both solid, and free safety



Charles Pharms has exceeded expectations. Miami's coaches expect him to come on in a couple of years and be an all-star player.

"Why did Miami beat Florida State so badly? I don't know. That's one of those aberrations, like LSU. Florida State was probably overconfident, and Bobby Bowden said as much after the game. Plus, Miami had a good defensive scheme to stop Sammie Smith, which they didn't have in 1987. Smith got something like 6 yards on 18 carries this year."

"If anything, Miami should be better next year than it is this year, especially if Walsh returns. Sure, Craig Erickson is a great quarterback on paper, and he's more than an adequate backup for Walsh. Still, he's inexperienced. There are questions on him just like there were questions on Walsh. Any way you look at it, Miami is young this year."

Dave Webber, WOWT-TV, Omaha, Neb.: "The key for the Huskers is that they have to play intelligent, intense defense. Don't worry about the Husker offense — they will be able to move the ball very easily. You could see that in the Miami-Arkansas game. The Huskers have to play like they did against OU in Norman. Trust me, the Husker secondary is up to the task of stopping Steve

Walsh. If the defensive line can put any kind of pressure on Walsh, the Huskers will win."

"The Orange Bowl people have promised that this wouldn't be a snakepit for the Huskers. Somehow, I don't believe them. Any time you play at Miami, it's a snakepit."

"Steve Taylor is the key for the offense. If he has a good game, it'll boil down to the Huskers winning this contest. One thing is for sure against Miami, however; the Huskers can't score seven points and win like they did in Norman."

"A lot of people almost beat Miami this year — Michigan should have, Arkansas should have, and Notre Dame barely did. If the Huskers win, they'll have to score at least 28 points. So, my prediction for this game is that **Nebraska will win, 28-21.**"

Tom D'Angelo, *Palm Beach Post*, West Palm Beach, Fla.: "One of the most overlooked parts of Jimmy Johnson's success is his staff. Johnson gives them a lot of responsibility — he oversees practice from a distance, like Bear Bryant used to. He puts a tremendous amount of trust in his assistants. Johnson's staff is very, very loyal to him."

"Essentially, Johnson is a defensive-minded coach. He completely revamped

the Miami defense in his second year. Sure, the offense gets the headlines, but Johnson admits readily that the offense is the same one Howard Schnellenberger installed many years ago, and Johnson doesn't try to take credit for it. But I'd say for the past three years the defense has been overlooked. It's been their staple.

"The Miami defensive system — and it really is a system for producing great players — is to recruit great athletes, without regard to high school position. For example, Miami's defensive linemen have rarely been defensive linemen in high school. Usually the great prep tackles or noseguards are huge, hulking guys who can't move. But Miami recruits athletic ability first, then they shift them. Usually they'll take a great tight end or linebacker who can run and put bulk on him so they end up with a mobile tackle or end."

"I think you'll see Miami come into this game on an even keel. Johnson was

a psychology major in college and does an excellent job of getting his players ready. The psychology angle of this game, between Johnson and Tom Osborne, will be interesting.

"Osborne came to the Miami-Brigham Young game just to get a feel for the atmosphere. He wasn't trying to scout Miami as much as he was trying to see the Orange Bowl, watch the fans and take in the big picture.

"The Orange Bowl could be in dangerous waters with Miami repeatedly getting a bid. There is the perception — and reasonably so — that the Orange Bowl has become self-serving with its selection of Miami. There's got to be some validity to the home-field advantage. Remember, Miami has never won a major bowl outside of the Orange Bowl. They've lost two Fiestas and a Sugar in the 1980s while winning the Orange Bowl twice."

Roger Hamer, KMTV-TV, Omaha, Neb.: "If Nebraska comes up with a

solid defensive effort against the pass, they will win this game. The Nebraska defense has to be able to keep Miami shut down for the whole game and not allow the big play. The Husker offense has to be able to stop the Miami offense by keeping them off of the field.

"Miami had a lot of trouble against an Arkansas team that some people say is greatly overrated. But Miami could have also been looking ahead to the Orange Bowl before the Arkansas game, and this is the reason for their poor play.

"The secondary has to play very tight against a great passer like Walsh. If the defensive line doesn't put a lot of pressure on him, it could be a long day for the Black Shirts.

"The offensive lines for both teams are the key to this game. If all the things I say come true, then I'll say **Nebraska 24, Miami 17**. If the Huskers don't win this baby, it's going to be a long off-season." ■

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Fast Start



Richard van Poelgeest's steady play should add stability at the post.

For the record, Nebraska's 1988-89 basketball season was christened by a Pete Manning slam dunk off a fastbreak 22 seconds into the Cornhuskers' 86-77 victory over intrastate rival Creighton at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

An opening-night audience of 12,087 applauded enthusiastically.

The victory, however, was a lot less flashy than the first of Manning's 13 points. It required hard work and teamwork, as well as contributions from the 10 Cornhuskers who played.

"I don't think we can play a 10- or 11-man rotation every night and expect to be successful," Cornhusker coach Danny Nee said afterwards.

But this time, he had to.

"I really felt the guys on the bench came in and gave us quality time and a lot of points," said Nee.

Ray Richardson contributed 15 points, while Rich King scored 10 points and pulled down seven rebounds, a total second only to Manning's 14.

That's right. King didn't start, which is as good a place as any to begin looking at Nee's third Nebraska team through its season-opener.

Richard van Poelgeest started at center for the Cornhuskers.

Van Poelgeest, a junior from the Netherlands, earned the right with a solid preseason, according to Nee. While van Poelgeest was showing the positive effects of a summer of competing with the Dutch national team, King was considering a redshirt.

The 7-foot-2 sophomore from Omaha sat out Nebraska's exhibition loss to Athletes in Action, just to be certain of his ultimate decision not to redshirt.

But van Poelgeest's starting had nothing to do with King, according to Nee. Rather, van Poelgeest was "one of the steadier players through all of the preseason," he said. "Richard's not flashy, but he gets the job done."

"He's a good role player. He's very good in our offense, setting picks. And he's probably our best defensive center

in helping out, rotating and playing post defense. That's his forte. We're very pleased with Richard."

Van Poelgeest played less than King in the Creighton game. But he did what was asked, scoring eight points, grabbing five rebounds and blocking a shot.

That doesn't mean King has been relegated to a sixth-man role.

"I don't want him to accept it," Nee said. "If he keeps improving at the rate he is, he's going to improve our team with the competition."

"Players have to be concerned with starting. It's a goal. But they also have to know the sixth or seventh man, in my mind, is just like a starter."

Nee plans on going with eight players most of the time this season.

In addition to Manning, van Poelgeest and King, that group includes Eric Johnson, Clifford Scales, Beau Reid, Ray Richardson and Dapreis Owens.

Johnson was easily the game's outstanding player with 31 points, seven assists, four rebounds and four steals; Scales and Reid were Nee's other starters against Creighton.

But Reid suffered an injured left foot when it was stepped on at the opening tip and came out 17 seconds into the game, disrupting Nee's plans.

Reid watched the game's end, standing on crutches in an entry way.

Richardson, a junior college transfer, replaced Reid and gave the Cornhuskers an offensive lift with 15 points.

Reid's foot wasn't broken, which was good news for Nebraska. "When we lose him, we lose an extremely good passer and a kid who, offensively, is a very important part of our scoring," said Nee. "And we miss his intensity."

The Cornhuskers also miss Reid's versatility. "He plays three positions," Nee said.

From Creighton's point of view, it must've seemed that Johnson was playing several positions, all at once. The senior from Brooklyn, N.Y., was the primary force in Nebraska's coming back from a 48-38 halftime deficit.

Down the stretch, Johnson seemed to be involved in just about every play.

"The microwave was hot," was how Manning would describe it.

Johnson scored 16 points on free throws, including 10-for-10 in the second



Although Coach Nee likes to play 'em one game at a time, beating Creighton helped, and so did Pete Manning (35).

half and eight-for-eight in the game's final 59 seconds. His 31 points were the most by a Cornhusker guard since 1976, when Jerry Fort scored 34 points in a loss to Kansas State.

Johnson's previous high at Nebraska was 17 points, against Chaminade.

"I was just concentrating, trying to do whatever I could to win," he said.

Nee was happy with Johnson's scoring, of course. But he wasn't pleased with what it indicated about the offense.

"We've got to get some balance," Nee said. "You can't expect E.J. to score 30 points every night. It's part of his job, but his primary job is to give us leadership on the floor, to get us in our offenses and defenses."

"I think he really gets underrated on his defense. The kid's a big-time defensive stopper when he gets on people with his long arms."

Against Creighton, though, Johnson had to be concerned with scoring as well

as preventing others from scoring.

He was 7-of-15 from the field, making his only 3-point attempt.

"Our wings, Ray and Clifford, didn't do a very good job of getting open," said Nee. "We missed Beau in that respect and put more pressure on E.J. to take the ball to the basket because of the over-commitment of Creighton's defense. Then, we got caught in a run-and-gun situation, which we like."

"But I'd like E.J. to give up the ball more. He can't do that for 31 games. On a given night he can be our leading scorer. But to do all we're asking him to do for 30-some games, I don't think he can. We have to get more people involved in the offense."

More Cornhuskers were involved in the Creighton game than anticipated.

Senior Todd Koca, a walkon from Papillion, Neb., sophomore Jed Bargen, and freshman Eric Dolezal all played in the first half and made significant contributions, according to Nee.

"I thought they handled it (the pressure) extremely well," he said.

Bargen, who was criticized by the student newspaper for missing a crucial shot in the exhibition loss to Athletes in Action, contributed five points and "did things the right way," said Nee.

"He's gotten a raw deal over the last couple of weeks," Nee said, referring to the student newspaper's story. "Jed has been very steady and hard-nosed, never complaining, doing his job."

Koca, who played a total of 18 minutes in four games last season, apparently has worked his way into a position in which he'll get first call to give Johnson a rest at point guard.

The collegiate debut of the 6-8 Owens, a highly regarded and much publicized freshman from Mansfield, Ohio, was delayed until the second half.

Nee intended to use him earlier, but because of Reid's injury, "I was caught off-guard," he said.

"When Beau went out like that and Ray (Richardson) went in the game, my computer wasn't geared for the substitutions. And then falling behind like we did, everything was scrambled the last 10 minutes (before intermission). It was just an oversight on my part."

If Nebraska is to be successful, "I feel we have to play Dapreis Owens, get him

1988-89 Early Signees

Nebraska basketball coach Danny Nee went three-for-three in recruiting, getting signatures on letters-of-intent from the top three high school players on his recruiting list during the NCAA's early signing period in November.

The three were Bruce Chubick, a 6-foot-7 Super-Stater from Atkinson West Holt High School in Atkinson, Neb.; Eric Piatkowski, also 6-7 from Stevens High in Rapid City, S.D.; and James Cole, a 6-3 All-State guard from Cresston High in Grand Rapids, Mich.

Chubick averaged 33.6 points and 14.5 rebounds as a junior to lead Atkinson West Holt to a 24-0 record and the Nebraska Class C-1 state title. He was the honorary captain of the 1988 *Sunday*

some experience," Nee says.

Owens will be worked in gradually, despite the fact "his credentials coming in were as good as anyone's could be. He's not flashy but he's been steady. He still has to adjust to Big Eight basketball. He's making the transition (from high school) slowly.

"But I see improvement."

The biggest adjustments for Owens, as with any freshman, are "just reacting, running the floor and playing defense. They don't understand the guy they're playing was all-state or all-county or all-league. In college, defense is the key. That's probably the biggest thing for anyone new, and we play a couple of defenses, so it's even a little bit more confusing," said Nee.

"The (college) game's completely different. For example, the quickness — things happen rapidly even when playing against men 7 feet tall. I don't think Dapreis is used to that, at least on a consistent basis. He was always the biggest guy, or one of the taller players. Now, he's just a regular-size forward. And he doesn't have the strength yet. He's developing that."

Being new to the program, Richardson has found himself in somewhat the same situation as Owens. But he's adjusted well, according to Nee.

"Ray's been to about four schools in four years, and this is, by far, the most

Journal-Star Super-State team.

Piatkowski, the first sophomore in 17 years to be picked on the South Dakota All-State team, averaged 21 points, 13 rebounds and five assists as a junior.

His father, Walt, played four seasons in the American Basketball Association.

Cole averaged 25 points, four rebounds and three assists last season. He also took recruiting trips to Central Michigan and Bowling Green, canceling visits to San Jose State and Southern Cal after committing to Nebraska.

Nee, pleased with the three signees, has indicated that recruiting is complete for this season. Now the coaches will begin evaluating current juniors for next season.

complicated system, the most structured, he's been in. But Ray's had a great attitude toward learning it. Now he recognizes immediately when he makes a mistake and he can go back and correct it," Nee said.

"Ray knows what he knows. And he knows what he doesn't know. And he's trying to learn what he doesn't know as rapidly as possible."

Richardson, who hit 4-of-10 from the field including 2-of-5 from 3-point range against Creighton, "gives us an automatic 3-point shooter. The guy can flat-out put it in the basket."

The 6-7 junior from South Bend, Ind., also can contribute in other ways.

"He's come in and become a character on the team, in a very positive sense with his sense of humor and jovial personality," said Nee.

"I don't mean that derogatorily. He keeps everyone relaxed. Ray's very witty, quick-tongued, silver-tongued. He's got that French pastry in him. But when you tell him to do it the right way, he does it. I think he just enjoys playing. He enjoys life."

Life should be just a little more enjoyable for the Cornhuskers with the victory over Creighton.

Nee, whose first two Nebraska teams lost two out of three games to the Bluejays, downplayed the game.

"The most important thing is to get

ready to play the game we're playing," he said beforehand. "I don't think our season hinges on the first game."

"We're going to tee it up 31 times. I worry about the count when it's over."

Even so, the Creighton game has become a focus of the non-conference season.

The series, which began in 1922-23, was resumed in 1977-78 and has been continuous since, with the Cornhuskers winning 10 of the last 13 games.

Nebraska has yet to lose to the Bluejays in the Sports Center and now leads in the series, 13-8, overall.

The Cornhuskers played Creighton twice in 1983-84 and again in 1986-87, Nee's first season at Nebraska.

Nee was opposed to the two-game arrangement, however, and last season, the teams played only once.

In announcing that, Nee said the decision was his, adding: "I don't know anybody anywhere who plays a non-conference opponent twice, not one."

Opening against each other doesn't seem to be a good idea, either.

So Nee and Tony Barone, Creighton's fourth-year head coach, agreed that beginning next season, the game will be played the third week in December.

The Cornhuskers credited the partisan Sports Center audience with an assist in this year's victory.

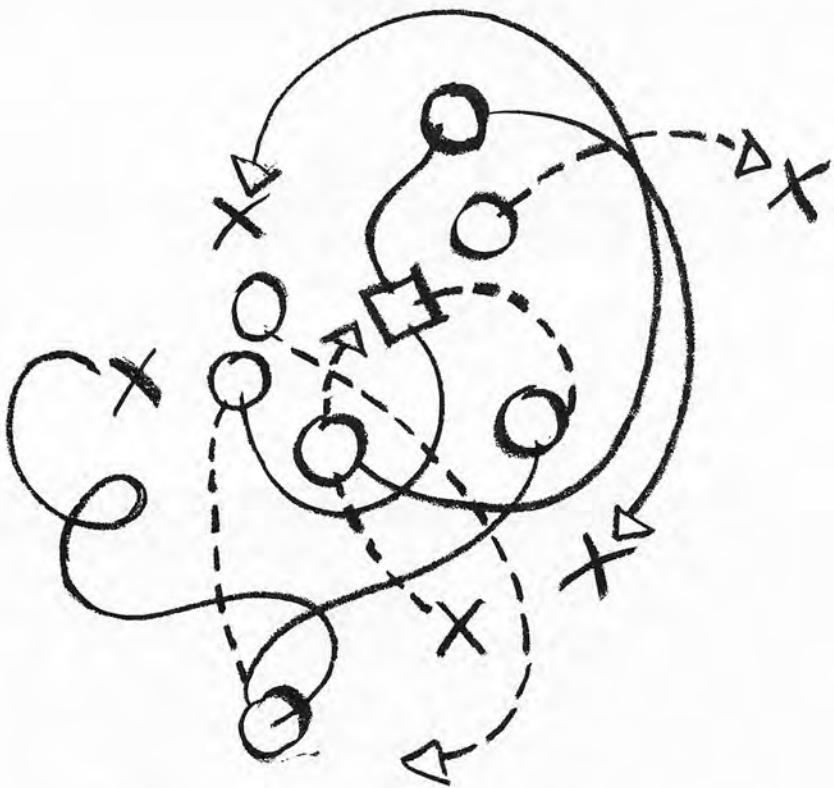
"The crowd... I really thought the homecourt advantage helped Nebraska," Nee said. "I don't know if it hurt Creighton, but it helped us."

The Cornhuskers apparently learned a lesson from Broderick Thomas, the Nebraska football team's All-American outside linebacker, according to Nee.

During the Creighton game, they regularly waved their arms to encourage the crowd to become involved, a habit for which Thomas became known.

King was among the most demonstrative of the Cornhuskers. After the game, he told a newspaper reporter to "put something in there about the crowd. I hope they realize what they can do."

"They were a big part of the second half (comeback). It seemed like (the cheering was) non-stop. That keeps you up when you're tired. It makes a difference. It really does. It's why teams like North Carolina are so tough at home," King said. ■



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Shattering the Myth

EX-HUSKERS IN THE NFL HAVE DISPROVEN THE RAP OF THE BIG EIGHT FLOP.

It wasn't that long ago that a scribe for *Sports Illustrated* proposed the "Great Nebraska Mystery" — or words to that effect — in which he asked just why Cornhusker stars were not successful when the National Football League called them to the professional ranks.

This writer went on to cite statistics that seemed to back up his assertions and, indeed, for a time it seemed that a large number of former Husker stars reached their pinnacle while wearing the scarlet and cream. More often than not, the players who did carve a niche for themselves in the pro ranks were the linemen, such as Bob Newton and John Dutton, or the defensive ends who were transformed into linebackers, such as Willie Harper or George Andrews.

One reason for this, the writer argued, was that for many Nebraska players, the goal in life is to play for the Big Red and once that goal is reached, they have difficulty redefining those goals to include a career in the NFL.

Another reason was recruiting — the type of athletes who were choosing Nebraska. As a rule, the Cornhuskers just weren't getting the type of players who were future NFL types.

The writer went on to suggest that the word was out on Nebraska players in the NFL and that teams might be growing hesitant to draft them as quickly as they ordinarily might.

That story appeared right around 1980, when the Huskers' recruiting entered a new era, one of computers and sophisticated methods of identifying ta-



Good friends at NU, Doug DuBose (left) and Brian Washington are now in the NFL.

lent. The results of that modernization can first be seen in the roll call of Husker wins over the past decade, and later in the careers of those players who have gone on to successful careers in the NFL.

In recent years, such products as Roger Craig and Mike Rozier have polished the image of the Nebraska I-back in the eyes of the NFL scouts, while defensive backs such as Brian Davis and Bret Clark have shown that Nebraska can produce backs on the defensive side of things as well. In addition, linemen such as Dave Rimington, Danny Noonan, and Jim Skow have made sure that the Huskers' longstanding reputation for producing quality linemen has remained intact.

But just how many Huskers are currently in the NFL? As the NFL season makes a turn out of the backstretch and into the turn for the Super Bowl, let's take a look around the NFL and see just where the former Huskers are plying their trade.

ATLANTA

Bret Clark, free safety. A former high school quarterback out of Nebraska City who became Nebraska's first All-American defensive back in eight years. When he was tabbed in 1984, Clark was first selected by

the Raiders in the seventh round in 1985 and later traded to the Falcons. A starter on a team that also features three former Oklahoma stars (Rick Bryan, Tony Casillas and Scott Case), Clark led the defensive backs with 47 tackles (32 unassisted, 15 assists) and led the team with four interceptions from his free safety position.

CINCINNATI

Jim Skow, defensive end. Always a terror as a pass rusher in college, Skow was thought by many NFL scouts to be too small at 6-foot-3 and 250 pounds to handle the trench warfare of the NFL. But the scrappy product of Omaha Roncalli High proved them all wrong. He made his mark first as a situational player, and has moved into a full-time starting role for the surprising Bengals. As the starting right end, he led the squad after nine games with 5½ quarterback sacks to go along with 30 tackles (24 unassisted) and a pair of fumble recoveries.

CLEVELAND

Brian Washington, strong safety. A surprise starter as a rookie in a defensive backfield that goes by the nickname of "The Dogs" and is generally regarded as the finest in pro football, Wash-

ton made the Browns coaches stand up and notice him during the preseason; once he earned a starting job, he has refused to give it up. He is second among the defensive backs and fourth overall on the team with 43 tackles, including 30 unassisted. He picked off a pair of passes and returned one of them 75 yards for a touchdown earlier in the year against Pittsburgh. He's also broken up four other aerials.

DALLAS

Danny Noonan, defensive tackle. The Cowboys' top pick in the 1987 draft, Noonan went through the trials and tribulations that most rookies encounter in their first NFL season. But his sophomore campaign has been a bright exception to an otherwise dreary season in Big D. Noonan leads the Cowboys with 6½ sacks in addition to piling up 33 tackles (19 unassisted). He also scored the first touchdown of his career when he snagged an interception and rumbled 17 yards for a score.

DENVER

Marc Munford, linebacker. One of the Huskers' brightest linebacking prospects through much of his career until knee injuries shelved him, Munford has fought hard to come back and earn a spot on the roster of his childhood idols, the Denver Broncos. Munford got his first taste of life in the NFL last season as a replacement player for Denver during the players' strike, and he was on hand again when the two-time AFC champions opened training camp this summer. He made it until the last cut, but was trimmed from the roster at that time. He was then re-signed by Denver on Oct. 2, and saw action as a special teams player. However, his season came to an end the following week when he suffered another knee injury in a game against San Francisco. He is currently on the Broncos' injured reserve list.

DETROIT

Jimmy Williams, outside linebacker. The elder statesman among Huskers currently in the NFL, Williams has developed a reputation as one the best linebackers in the NFL, though most fans have never heard of him. A former walkon who came to Nebraska with his



1988 rookie Neil Smith of the Kansas City Chiefs has struggled with injuries.

brother Toby (see New England), Williams' steady play and his leadership on the field earned him the right to be selected as the Lions' defensive captain. Ironically, Williams suffered a similar fate to Munford's against San Francisco. On Oct. 2, Williams suffered a knee injury that required arthroscopic surgery. However, the seven-year NFL veteran is expected back in the lineup in the near future. Prior to his injury, Williams had chalked up 26 tackles (22 unassisted) to go along with two sacks and an interception.

HOUSTON

Mike Rozier, halfback; Jamie Williams, tight end; Dean Steinkuhler, offensive tackle. The Oilers have been one of the rising young teams in the AFC and the trio of talented Husker alumni has played a key role in that resurgence. Rozier, who struggled with injuries and minor league blockers during his fling with the USFL, has found the Oilers' hulking front wall more to his liking. He rushed for over 900 yards in 1987 and earned a trip to the Pro Bowl. This season, he has become a consistent weapon for the Oilers, and along with Alonzo Highsmith (a former nemesis from the 1983 Orange Bowl), Allan Pinkett and Lorenzo White, the four have been called the most talented collection of

running backs in the AFC. He rushed for 552 yards on 142 carries in Houston's first nine games this season and caught five passes for 39 more.

Williams has become one of the best blocking tight ends in the game and his personal flair has also made him one of the most easily recognizable players in the league. Each year he has chosen a new hair style, and for 1988 he's sporting long, tubular curls known as dreadlocks, which flow out the back of his helmet. His love of "Spiderman" comic books has also grabbed him a few inches of ink during the year. Williams was first drafted by the New York Giants out of Nebraska, but was cut. He moved on to St. Louis for a short stay and also spent time with Tampa Bay before finding a home in Houston.

For Steinkuhler, the road has been a rugged climb back. Highly prized after winning the Outland and Lombardi Trophies as the premier lineman in the nation in 1983, Steinkuhler was the second pick overall in the 1984 draft. With his combination of size and exceptional speed, he was expected to be the dominant lineman of his era. But a severe knee injury in the 10th game of his rookie year knocked him out of action for over a year. He came back in 1986 to earn a job as the Oilers' starting right tackle, and while teammates Mike Munchak and Bruce Mathews have earned most of the headlines, Steinkuhler's steady play has been one of the factors in the Oilers' rise. Most recently, his expert job of containing the Redskins' All-Pro end Charles Mann was one of the big reasons that the Oilers were able to blow out the defending Super Bowl champions.

KANSAS CITY

Neil Smith, defensive end. Danny Noonan could likely sympathize with the plight of Smith as the rookie defensive end struggled through his adjustment phase with the Chiefs. As the second pick overall in the draft, Smith is under close scrutiny, but his play has picked up after a slow start. Even though he has missed five of the first nine games due to minor injuries, Smith has still racked up 24 tackles (17 unassisted), been credited with 2½ quarterback sacks for a total of 26 yards lost, deflected three

passes and forced one fumble.

LOS ANGELES RAIDERS

Bill Lewis, offensive tackle; Tim Rother, defensive end. The massive Lewis, who earned All-American honors as a center for the Huskers in 1985, has made the

switch to tackle with the Raiders. Rother, who went from being an unpublicized walkon from Bellevue to a fourth-round pick in the NFL draft last season, was injured during training camp and has spent the entire season on the Raiders' injured reserve list.



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NEW ENGLAND

Irving Fryar, wide receiver; Toby Williams, nose tackle. The NFL's top pick in 1983, Fryar has had his ups and downs during his tenure with the Patriots. But his play in 1988 has proven he is still one of the most dangerous wide receivers in the game. He has averaged 15.3 yards per catch for the Patriots through nine games (24 catches for 368 yards) and has scored four times. His longest play of the year came against the Bears on Oct. 30, when he snagged an 80-yard bomb from Doug Flutie on the game's first play.

Williams has been a backup for the Patriots on the defensive line, and the six-year veteran has been credited with three tackles.

NEW YORK JETS

Keith Neubert, tight end. The former basketball player who earned a shot at the NFL after just one season of football with the Big Red was drafted by the Jets but suffered cracked ribs during training camp and has spent the season on injured reserve.

PHILADELPHIA

Dave Rimington, center. One of the most decorated linemen to come out of Nebraska, Rimington toiled for five years with the Bengals but was waived during training camp. The Eagles gladly picked him up and Rimington has started every game for Buddy Ryan's resurgent team.

PITTSBURGH

Brian Blankenship, guard. Another ex-Husker who earned a shot at the NFL by first becoming a replacement player during last year's strike, Blankenship remained with the Steelers after the strike was settled last season. He was then released during the final cut this fall, but re-signed after the Steelers lost two guards in the same game. Blankenship has started the last five games for Pittsburgh.

PHOENIX

Chris Spachman, defensive end. A pass-rushing specialist during his days at Nebraska, Spachman made his debut with the Cardinals in 1987. He was injured in training camp this summer and

has spent the season on injured reserve.

SAN FRANCISCO

Roger Craig, halfback; Tom Rathman, fullback, Doug DuBose halfback/kick returner. Perhaps there is no greater evidence that the "Nebraska Mystery" is a myth than to look at the production that the 49ers get out of their Husker products. Craig may simply have become the best all-around back in the NFL. His past seasons would have been enough to mount a good argument, but his numbers just past the halfway point of 1988 add the exclamation point. He was tied for the NFL lead with 51 receptions (ironically tied with another product of a school not known for passing, Keith Jackson of Oklahoma), good for 348 yards. He rushed 165 times for 851 yards and four scores, including a 190-yard effort against the Rams.

Rathman has caught 27 passes for 230 yards and rambled for another 304 on 71 carries. His no-nonsense attitude and

hard running style have made him a favorite of the fans at Candlestick.

DuBose has battled back from injuries and personal problems that nearly derailed a promising career. Signed as a free agent, he is a backup at halfback, having rushed 16 times for 56 yards and a touchdown, and catching five passes for another 51 yards. He's also returned 19 kicks for a total of 371 yards.

SEATTLE

Bruce Mathison, quarterback. After stops in San Diego and Buffalo during his career, Mathison now finds himself on the roster in Seattle, but he has yet to see any action. Signed as insurance, Mathison spends most weeks on the inactive list, but works out each week just in case he is needed.

TAMPA BAY

Jeff Smith, halfback/kick returner. The depth the Huskers had at I-back in 1982 is even more obvious today. On that

squad were Craig, Rozier and a freshman named DuBose in addition to Smith. While he might have spent most of his career at Nebraska in the shadow of others, the fact that Smith has spent four seasons in the NFL points to the depth on campus at that time. He has caught 11 passes for 88 yards and rushed eight times for another 22.

WASHINGTON

Brian Davis, safety. After just missing a chance at the national championship in his two seasons at Nebraska, Davis found himself playing for the Super Bowl-champion Redskins in 1987. As a result, Davis also finds himself in a commercial. It features Dave Butz and Charles Mann flipping for the final bottle of a soft drink. Davis is a player on the bench who hides another bottle of the beverage. This season, although bothered by a pulled thigh muscle, he has 26 tackles (23 assisted) to go along with a pair of interceptions. ■

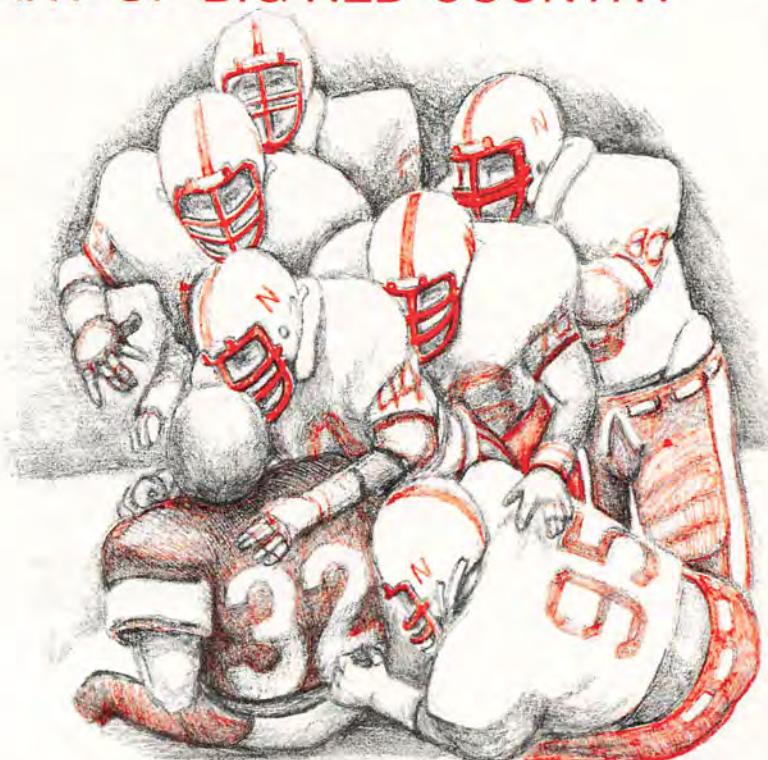
FROM THE HEART OF BIG RED COUNTRY



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Paced by All-Americans Broderick Thomas and Jake Young, Nebraska enjoyed tremendous success in the race for post-season football honors, both on the field and in the classroom. Thomas, NU's most decorated outside linebacker in history, was a consensus All-American, while Young was named first-team All-American by the Football Writers Association of America and the Associated Press.

Thomas has made All-American two years in a row and All-Big Eight for three seasons.

Nebraska led the Big Eight with five first-team selections to the 1988 academic honor roll.

The Big Eight changed the qualifying format last spring. A student-athlete must have a 3.0 (up from a 2.8) grade-point average in the previous academic year, or cumulative, and must be a regular (first or second team, letterman). Because of the increased standard, the conference now recognizes an "honor roll" and picks a first-team unit from student-athletes who qualify for that list. True freshmen and first-year transfers are not eligible.

Nebraska's first-team honorees this year were Young, with a 3.22 GPA in finance; senior offensive guard John Nelson, with a 3.59 GPA in management; junior quarterback Gerry Gdowski, with a 3.7 GPA in business administration; senior safety Mark Blazek, with a 3.97 GPA in social science education; and junior linebacker Randall Jobman, with a 3.34 GPA in agriculture.

Five other Huskers made the honor roll: junior offensive guard Bill Bobbora, with a 3.30 GPA in psychology; senior linebacker Jon Marco, with a 3.02 GPA in business administration; sophomore linebacker Pat Tyrance, with a 3.50 GPA in pre-medicine; sophomore defensive tackle Paul Brungardt, with a 3.02 GPA in civil engineering; and senior punter John Kroeker, with a 3.64 GPA in business administration.

Blazek and Kroeker also won Academic All-Big Eight honors in 1987.

Overall, Nebraska's 10 total selections to this year's team led the league, with Kansas State coming in second with seven picks. Oklahoma and Kansas each had six selections, while Oklahoma State, Colorado and Iowa State each had

PILING ON

POST-SEASON AWARDS WERE HEAPED ON BIG RED FOOTBALLERS AT AN HISTORIC PACE.



Broderick Thomas (89) has become NU's most decorated linebacker in history.

five players on the honor roll squad. Missouri landed three choices.

Earlier this year, Blazek was named the winner of a \$4,000 scholar-athlete award from the National Football Foundation Hall of Fame.

Blazek relays this story about a professor: "I had one who was constantly making derogatory jokes in class about football players. I purposely tried extra hard. It was kind of funny because John Nelson was in the class, too. The first test, (the professor) made three or four comments about football players and their grades...and the first test I got the highest grade in the class, and John got the second highest. Pretty good for a couple of dumb football players."

Also relating to academics, former Husker quarterback Clete Blakeman has been honored with the Bobby Reynolds Memorial Scholarship. Blakeman was a quarterback for the Huskers from 1984-87.

The family and friends of Bobby Reynolds established the scholarship, to be awarded to a male athlete who lettered at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in football, baseball, basketball or golf and who is a student enrolled or accepted for enrollment to graduate college at Nebraska. Criteria for the selection include academic quality, career potential in his chosen field, plus high ideals, integrity and leadership.

Blakeman is the second recipient, the first being split end Robb Schnitzler of Battle Creek, Neb. Blakeman was a reserve quarterback for the Huskers and lettered in 1985-6-7. In his career, he rushed for 282 yards and seven touchdowns and completed 45 of 79 passes for 625 yards and another seven touchdowns.

He was named to the Academic All-Big Eight team in 1987. Blakeman graduated with a degree in business administration in August 1987, even before his athletic eligibility was complete. He is now enrolled in law school at Nebraska.

The late Bobby Reynolds was one of Nebraska's great All-Americans, rushing for 1,342 yards and leading the nation in scoring with 157 points in 1950. His scoring average of 17.4 points per game was the longest standing NCAA record until Oklahoma State I-back Bar-

ry Sanders broke it this year. In 1984, Reynolds was enshrined in the National Football Hall of Fame.

Coach Tom Osborne even got into the awards act this year. Osborne was named the 1988 Big Eight Coach of the Year by his peers, the Associated Press and United Press International.

Osborne has received conference Coach of the Year honors four times and has coached the Huskers to seven Big Eight titles, including four outright crowns.

With Nebraska's 7-3 win at Oklahoma Nov. 19, which clinched the Orange Bowl berth, the Husker coach has now won more games than any other coach in Big Eight history. Osborne's record of 158-36-2 (81.5 winning percentage) leaves him one victory ahead of Oklahoma's Barry Switzer (157-28-4, with a 84.1 winning percentage). Switzer and Osborne are the two winningest active coaches in college football.

On the All-Big Eight front, the Huskers dominated the conference all-stars as never before. In winning its first outright league crown since 1983, the Huskers had a school-record 13 players selected to at least one of the teams chosen by the conference coaches, the Associated Press and United Press International. Nine of the 13 were on all three teams, including linebacker LeRoy Etienne, cornerback Charles Fryar, defensive tackle Willie Griffin, free safety Tim Jackson, tight end Todd Millikan, noseguard Lawrence Pete, offensive tackle Bob Sledge, quarterback Steve Taylor, and linebacker Broderick Thomas. All are seniors.

They were joined by Jake Young, who was tabbed by the Associated Press and coaches, plus senior wingback Dana Brinson (coaches), junior I-back Ken Clark (AP) and senior offensive guard Andy Keeler (UPI). Brinson was selected as a kick return specialist.

Sophomore strong safety Reggie Cooper was a consensus second-team selection on the all-conference teams.

Nebraska's previous high for all-conference picks was 12 by the 1971 national championship team, which is still regarded by many as the best college football team of all time.

Thomas was a consensus pick as Big Eight Defensive Player of the Year, and

All-star combo:
center Jake
Young (68)
made All-
American this
year, while
Steve Taylor (9)
repeated as
the Big Eight's
best
quarterback.



junior cornerback Bruce Pickens, a junior college transfer, was named Big Eight Defensive Newcomer of the Year.

All-Big Eight selections for other league schools were:

Oklahoma: (first team) OG Anthony Phillips, sr.; DT Scott Evans, so.; DB Scott Garl, sr.; DL Tony Woods, sr.; and QB Charles Thompson, so., plus (second team) DL Curtice Williams, sr.; P Todd Thomsen, sr.; RB Mike Gadis, fr.; and OL Terron Manning, so.

Oklahoma State: (first team) RB Barry Sanders, jr.; WR Hart Lee Dykes, sr.; OL Byron Woodard, sr.; OL Chris Stanley, sr.; plus (second team) WR Jarrod Green, jr.; K Cary Blanchard, so.; and QB Mike Gundy, jr.

Colorado: (first team) RB Eric Bienemy, so.; DE Kanavis McGhee, so.; P Keith English, sr.; plus (second team) OL Mark VanderPoel, so.; C Eric Norgard, sr.; DT Arthur Walker, jr.; DE Alfred Williams, so.; DB Bruce Young, jr.; and Darrin Muilenburg, jr.

Iowa State: (first team) LB Mike Shane, sr.; K Jeff Shudak, so.; plus (second team) RB Joe Henderson, sr.; TE Mike Busch, jr.; DB Ray Carreathers, sr.; and DB Jeff Dole, sr.

Missouri: (first team) DB Adrian Jones, jr.; plus (second team) OL Carl Bax, sr.; DL Steve Vandegrift, sr.; LB Darren MacDonald, jr.; and LB A.J. Miller, jr.

Kansas: (first team) WR Willie Vaughn, sr.; plus (second team) DB

Pedra Samuel, sr.; and LB Curtis Moore, so.

Kansas State: (second team only) WR Greg Washington, jr.; and LB Maurice Henry, jr.

In the race for the fourth annual Butkus Award as the nation's outstanding college linebacker, Thomas came in second to Derrick Thomas (no relation) of Alabama.

Derrick Thomas received two more points in the voting by a 12-member selection panel than Nebraska's Thomas.

On a 3-2-1 point system, Alabama's Thomas received four first-place ballots and a total of 22 points. Broderick Thomas got three first-place votes and 20 points.

Mike Stonebreaker of Notre Dame was third in the balloting, followed by Keith DeLong of Tennessee and Percy Snow of Michigan State. All are seniors, except Stonebreaker and Snow.

Previous Butkus winners are Brian Bosworth of Oklahoma in 1985 and 1986, and Paul McGowan of Florida State in 1987.

On the national scene, Forrest E. Behm, All-American tackle on the 1940 Nebraska Rose Bowl team was inducted into the National Football Hall of Fame in early December in New York City.

After playing freshman football at Nebraska, Behm started for three straight years. He went from Nebraska

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football to achieve honors in the Army during World War II and in the business world as president of Corning Glass International.

Other Cornhusker players in the National Hall of Fame are Guy Chamberlin (1913-15), Sam Francis (1934-36), Bobby Reynolds (1950-52), George Sauer (1931-33), Clarence Swanson (1919-22) and Ed Weir (1923-25). Francis was the last player to be inducted, having received the honor in 1977.

Nebraska coaches in the National Hall of Fame are Dana X. Bible, Bob Devaney, Biff Jones, E.N. Robinson and Fielding Yost.

The following is a rundown of the 1988 All-American teams.

WALTER CAMP

Offense

QB — Troy Aikman, UCLA, sr.
RB — Barry Sanders, Okla. St., jr.
RB — Anthony Thompson, Indiana, jr.
RB — Tim Worley, Georgia, jr.
WR — Hart Lee Dykes, Okla. St., sr.
TE — Troy Sadowski, Georgia, jr.
OT — Tony Mandarich, Mich. St., sr.
OT — Pat Tomberlin, Fla. St., sr.
C — John Vitale, Michigan, sr.
OG — Anthony Phillips, Okla., sr.
OG — Mark Stepnoski, Pitt, sr.
K — Kendall Trainor, Arkansas, sr.

Defense

DL — Mark Messner, Michigan, sr.
DL — Tracy Rocker, Auburn, sr.
DL — Dave Haight, Iowa, sr.
DL — Bill Hawkins, Miami, sr.
LB — Derrick Thomas, Alabama, sr.
LB — Broderick Thomas, Neb., sr.
LB — Mike Stonebreaker, ND, sr.
DB — Darryl Henley, UCLA, sr.
DB — Louis Oliver, Florida, sr.
DB — Deion Sanders, Florida St. sr.
DB — Donnell Woolford, Clemson, sr.
P — Keith English, Colo., sr.

FWAA

Offense

QB — Steve Walsh, Miami, jr.
RB — Barry Sanders, Okla. St., jr.
RB — Darren Lewis, Texas A&M, so.
RB — Tim Worley, Georgia, jr.
WR — Clarkston Hines, Duke, jr.
WR — Jason Phillips, Houston, sr.
OL — Jake Young, Nebraska, jr.
OL — Anthony Phillips, Okla., sr.

OL — Tony Mandarich, Mich. St., sr.
OL — Mark Stepnoski, Pitt, sr.
OL — Mike Utley, Wash. St., sr.
K — Chris Jacky, UTEP, sr.

Defense

DL — Wayne Martin, Arkansas, sr.
DL — Mark Messner, Mich., sr.
DL — Tracy Rocker, Auburn, sr.
DL — Tim Ryan, USC, jr.
LB — Broderick Thomas, Neb., sr.
LB — Carnell Lake, UCLA, sr.
LB — Derrick Thomas, Alabama, sr.
LB — Mike Stonebreaker, ND, sr.
DB — Deion Sanders, Florida St., sr.
DB — Markus Paul, Syracuse, sr.
DB — Donnell Woolford, Clemson, sr.

KODAK

Offense

QB — Rodney Peete, USC, sr.
RB — Barry Sanders, Okla. St., jr.
RB — Tim Worley, Georgia, jr.
WR — Erik Affholter, USC, sr.
WR — Jason Phillips, Houston, sr.

TE — Marv Cook, Iowa, sr.
OL — Tony Mandarich, Mich. St., sr.
OL — Anthony Phillips, Okla., sr.
OL — Mark Stepnoski, Pitt, sr.
OL — Mike Utley, Wash. St., sr.
OL — Steve Wisnewski, Penn St., sr.
K — Kendall Trainor, Arkansas, sr.

Defense

DL — Tracy Rocker, Auburn, sr.
DL — Mark Messner, Mich., sr.
DL — Broderick Thomas, Neb., sr.
DL — Derrick Thomas, Alabama, sr.
DL — Bill Hawkins, Miami, sr.
LB — Britt Hager, Texas, sr.
LB — Jerry Olsavsky, Pitt, sr.
DB — Deion Sanders, Florida St., sr.
DB — Louis Oliver, Florida, sr.
DB — Darryl Henley, UCLA, sr.
DB — Donnell Woolford, Clemson, sr.
P — Pat Thompson, Brigham Young, sr.

FOOTBALL NEWS

Offense

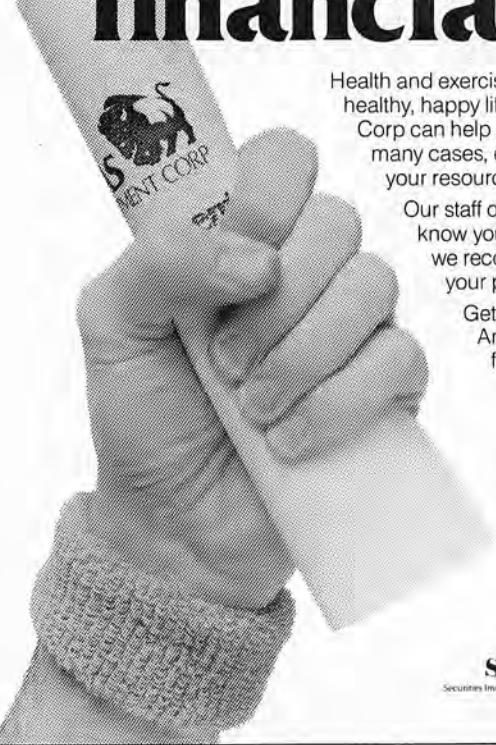
QB — Troy Aikman, UCLA, sr.

RB — Barry Sanders, Okla. St., jr.
RB — Cleveland Gary, Miami, sr.
WR — Hart Lee Dykes, Okla. St., sr.
WR — Jason Phillips, Houston, sr.
TE — Marv Cook, Iowa, sr.
OT — Tony Mandarich, Mich. St., sr.
OT — Andy Heck, ND, sr.
OG — Anthony Phillips, Okla., sr.
OG — Mike Utley, Wash. St., sr.
C — Joe Tofflemire, Arizona, sr.
K — Kendall Trainor, Arkansas, sr.

Defense

DL — Tracy Rocker, Auburn, sr.
DL — Mark Messner, Mich., sr.
DL — Dave Haight, Iowa, sr.
LB — Broderick Thomas, Neb., sr.
LB — Derrick Thomas, Alabama, sr.
LB — Mike Stonebreaker, ND, jr.
LB — Frank Stans, ND, sr.
DB — Deion Sanders, Florida St., sr.
DB — Markus Paul, Syracuse, sr.
DB — Darryl Henley, UCLA, sr.
DB — Mark Carrier, USC, so.
P — Keith English, Colo., sr. ■

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Prep All-Americans for 1988

The off-campus recruiters were at it for nearly two months trying to evaluate the high school football talent while there was some regular season remaining in which to observe the schoolboy talent in competition.

These men, who have spent hours, weeks and months collecting data to help guide them in the hunt for talent their team needs, have enough trouble deciding which individuals merit visits and ultimately, offers of athletic grants. So, our vestigial expertise needed and appreciatively received input from high school beat writers throughout the nation.

The initial list had over 900 names. It was pared down to 220 names from which we selected the final 80. It was agreed there was a great possibility the next 80 names selected could produce as many college standouts as our primary list. And, maybe the same could be said for a third list of 80 prospects. The selections represent opinions from the media, although we're sure an overwhelming number of these names are on the confidential lists of all the college recruiters.

While this list represents names, schools, states and areas primarily recruited by most of the Big Eight teams, it does include players from 20 different states. It's obvious, the most sought after talent is centered in three states . . . California, Texas and Florida.

Texas is the most fertile football recruiting state in the nation, and, while Pennsylvania has claimed to be the grid mecca of high school football, it must be remembered, some think Texas launched the habit of spring practice shortly after that business at the Alamo was finally settled.

Bill Buckhalter of the *Orlando (Fla.) Sentinel*, who also periodically publishes a national recruiting roundup, said, "If Pennsylvania has the most high school football talent, then its only two major football teams (Penn State and Pittsburgh) should go unbeaten every year."

Well, what about the axiom that everybody recruits Pennsylvania?

"Texas and Florida are recruited by everybody, too," Buckhalter claims. "Florida supplies talent for three major college teams and Texas has to feed eight Southwest Conference schools, plus the annual raids by Oklahoma and Nebraska, to mention a few."

This year there appears to be a slight shortage of quarterbacks but plenty of everything else. The linemen are large, and the linebackers have stunning speed (given the unlikely conclusion all of the listed times are correct), the running backs offer everything, and there is a plethora of wide receivers.

Regardless of pitfalls and suspicions, there is the usual insatiable appetite on the part of the rabid fan to discuss the schoolboy hopefuls. So, let us inspect some of the players we have chosen.

Over half of the 80 Sports Magazines of America All-Americans on our list come from Texas, Florida and California. Houston, Dallas, Los Angeles and Florida are primary targets of recruiters, so, let's see who our panelists rate as the top five in each area.

FLORIDA

Buckhalter believes Ken Felder of Niceville is the best quarterback prospect to come along in the Sunshine State in a decade. In Niceville's two toughest district wins, Felder ran or passed for all of his team's touchdowns. Wideouts Eric Turrell, Tallahassee (Godby), and Horace Copeland, Orlando (Evans), are the pick of an outstanding flock of wide receivers. Turrell averages 30 yards per reception and one anonymous recruiter claims, "There's nobody else like him. He should be the offensive player of the year." LB Richard McKenzie, Lauderdale Lakes (Anderson), and DB John Davis, Pa-hokee, will hear their phones ring quite often. Plus, there are so many outstanding linemen, it was too difficult just to pick one.

DALLAS

Scott Reed of the *Times-Herald* liked drop-back QB Tommy Maddox, Hurst (Bell), who he says has an "NFL arm

and passed for almost 1,400 yards in his first seven games." LB Jessie Armstead, Dallas (Carter), runs faster than most halfbacks and has limitless numbers of collegiate offers, while his teammate, DB Derric Evans, is considered the top secondary prospect. The best wide receiver of a bumper crop at this position is swift Kevin Williams, Dallas (Roosevelt), and Reed can't hide his admiration for TE Steve Seagraves, Mesquite, and C. John English, Arlington (High). We've just scratched the surface in the talent-rich Dallas area.

HOUSTON . . .

Plus, the fabulously endowed Golden Triangle area. Kevin Newberry and John Marvel of the *Houston Post* admit it's a great year and to narrow the list to the top five may be impossible. One of the most recruited running backs in the nation is Robert Strait of Cuero, who's about the only thing his team has, and defenses load-up against him. The 6-2, 220-pound Strait has responded with 38, 100-yard or more games in his career . . . a Texas schoolboy record.

TE Pat Bates, Galveston (Bell), is regarded as "the best athlete in the area, maybe the entire state." Option QB Bert Emanuel, Houston (Langham Creek), rushed and passed for more than 1,100 yards in his first six games and RB/DB Grady Caveness, Houston (Willowridge), plays offense, defense and returns kicks for his team. OL John Karboska, Aldine, is one of many mobile mountains in the Houston area.

LOS ANGELES

Mark Tennis of *Cal High Sports* claims, "It's too early to say if this is the best crop in years, but it's better than average, that's for sure. We're seeing a lot more of Miami (Fla.), Penn State and Notre Dame recruiting this area than ever before."

RB's Derek Brown, Anaheim (Service) and Russell White, Encino (Crespi), will attract everyone's attention. In a head-to-head meeting, Brown rushed for almost 300 yards while White gained slightly more than 100.

High School All-Americans*

	Speed	Ht.	Wt.	Hometown / High School
Quarterbacks				
Curtis Conway	4.4	6-1	175	Hawthorne, Calif.
Bert Emanuel	4.5	6-0	175	Houston (Langham Creek), Tex.
Ken Felder	4.6	6-3	205	Niceville, Fla.
J.J. Joe	4.6	5-11	175	Arlington (Lamar), Tex.
Tommy Maddox	4.6	6-5	190	Hurst (Bell), Tex.
Running Backs				
Clyde Allen	4.45	5-11	180	Ft. Myers, Fla.
Michael Bates	4.45	5-11	185	Tucson (Amphitheater), Ariz.
Odell Beckham	4.55	5-11	190	Marshall, Tex.
Dewell Brewer	4.45	5-9	190	Lawton, Okla.
Derek Brown	4.5	5-10	185	Anaheim (Servite), Calif.
Jimmer Bundy	4.6	6-0	240	Woodbury, N.J.
Ernest Crank	4.5	5-11	180	Bolingbrook, Ill.
Lamel Foreman	4.4	6-0	185	Del City, Okla.
Cedric Harper	4.5	5-11	180	Richardson, Tex.
Rudy Harris	4.6	6-2	220	Brockton, Mass.
Terry Kirby	4.5	6-2	215	Tabb, Va.
Burnie Legette	4.6	6-2	200	Colo. Springs (Mitchell), Colo.
Robert Strait	4.5	6-2	220	Cuero, Tex.
Russell White	4.45	6-3	195	Encino (Crespi), Calif.
Jermaine Williams	4.45	6-2	195	Detroit (Chadsey), Mich.
Tight Ends				
Brian Allen	4.65	6-4	210	Newall (Hart), Calif.
Pat Bates	4.65	6-4	215	Galveston (Ball), Tex.
Joey Mickey	4.7	6-7	240	Oklahoma City (Millwood), Okla.
Ted Page	4.85	6-4	235	Cherry Hill (East), N.J.
Steve Seagraves	4.8	6-4	220	Mesquite, Tex.
Irv Smith	4.6	6-4	225	Pemberton, N.J.
Wide Receivers				
Horace Copeland	4.55	6-4	190	Orlando (Evans), Fla.
Matt Frier	4.55	6-0	180	Sewanee (Live Oak), Fla.
Ray Griggs	4.5	6-3	180	Crete-Monee, Ill.
Ed Henderson	4.5	5-11	175	Port Arthur (Jefferson), Tex.
Mario Henry	4.5	6-2	190	Medford-Lanape, N.J.
Eric Turrell	4.4	5-11	175	Tallahassee (Godby), Fla.
Kevin Williams	4.4	5-9	170	Dallas (Roosevelt), Tex.
Offensive Linemen				
Rudy Barber	4.9	6-4	275	Carol City, Fla.
Lee Brown	5.3	6-4	310	Louisville, Miss.
Jeff Concienne	5.0	6-4	270	River Ridge (Curtis), La.
James Cargill	5.1	6-7	285	Plainview, Tex.
Vito Cingepalmi	4.9	6-3	250	Chicago (St. Patrick's), Ill.
John English	5.2	6-4	225	Arlington (High), Tex.
John Karkoska	4.9	6-3	260	Aldine, Tex.
Kevin Kelly	5.1	6-3	260	Santa Monica, Va.
Lance Larsen	5.1	6-5	230	Moorehead, Minn.
Shannon Nevodomsky	5.1	6-3	260	Humble, Tex.
Ryan Patterson	4.9	6-3	240	Jenks, Okla.
Morris Unutoa	4.8	6-3	245	Carson, Calif.
Bob Whitfield	5.0	6-7	270	Wilmington (Banning), Calif.
Todd Yeaman	4.9	6-4	275	Fort Worth (Western Hills), Tex.
Linebackers / Defensive Ends				
Jessie Armstead	4.45	6-2	205	Dallas (Carter), Tex.
Joe Barry	4.7	6-2	210	Boulder (High), Colo.
Arthur Bussie	4.65	6-3	220	Camden, N.J.
Marvin Ferrell	4.8	6-4	235	Jacksonville (Raines), Fla.
Sean Gilbert	4.8	6-6	260	Aliquippa, Pa.
Antonio London	4.55	6-4	200	Tullahoma, Tenn.
James Mallett	4.65	6-3	210	Liberty, Tex.
Richard McKenzie	4.5	6-3	220	Lauderdale Lakes (Anderson), Fla.
Tyrone Morrison	4.6	6-3	235	San Diego (Morse), Calif.
Eric Shaw	4.6	6-3	223	Pensacola, Fla.
Defensive Linemen				
Andy Abramowicz	4.9	6-3	250	New Orleans (Jesuit), La.
Tamasi Amituanai	4.96	6-4	296	Vista, Calif.
Brad Banta	4.8	6-5	230	Baton Rouge (University), La.
Cedric Bembry	5.0	6-0	270	Carol City, Fla.
Junior Bryant	5.1	6-5	270	Omaha (Creighton Prep), Neb.
David Condon	4.9	6-4	235	Arlington (Martin), Tex.
Mike Hinz	4.8	6-3	255	Riverside (Ramona), Calif.
Shannon Jones	4.6	6-4	220	Houston (Smiley), Tex.
Brent LeJeune	5.1	6-5	280	Lake Charles (Barbe), La.
Mike Lewis	5.1	6-5	275	Brockton, Mass.
Sterling Palmer	4.8	6-6	250	Ft. Lauderdale (St. Thomas), Fla.
Alonzo Spellman	5.0	6-6	260	Mt. Holly (Rancocas), N.J.
Pierre Wilson	4.78	6-4	258	Jackson (Provine), Miss.
Defensive Backs				
Grady Caveness	4.5	5-10	180	Houston (Willowridge), Tex.
John Davis	4.52	6-4	200	Pahokee, Fla.
Derrick Evans	4.5	6-3	190	Dallas (Carter), Tex.
Robert Gamble	4.5	5-10	185	Kansas City (Rockhurst), Mo.
Eric Geter	4.5	6-0	195	Newman, Ga.
Odell Joyner	4.6	6-3	215	Virginia Beach (Colonial), Va.
Cookie Massey	4.6	6-1	190	Rock Hill (Northwestern), S.C.
Robert O'Neal	4.45	6-2	180	Clarkston, Ga.
Foster Paulk	4.5	5-11	180	Sarasota (Riverview), Fla.
Punters / Place Kickers				
Craig Henrich	6-1		175	Alton-Marquette, Ill.
Paul Stonehouse	5-9		165	Los Angeles (Loyola), Calif.

*As selected by *Huskers Illustrated*

Hulking OL Bob Whitfield, Wilmington (Banning), is the best of a lot of great line prospects in the area and option-type QB Chris Conway, Hawthorne, can throw and run with the best of them. In fact, he ran well enough to finish second in the state track meet in the 100 meters. Enough said, but there are many, many other prospects in this area.

Now, a brief appraisal, by position, and why we selected some and didn't include others.

QUARTERBACKS

Two are drop-back passers and are exceptionally good at it, Tommy Maddox of Hurst, Tex., and Ken Felder of Niceville, Fla. The ever popular demand for the quarterback who can run the option as well as throw is being answered nicely by Chris Conway, Hawthorne, Calif.; Bert Emanuel, Houston, Tex., and J. J. Joe, Arlington, Tex. Near-misses included Reggie Perry, Denison, Tex., who suffered a fractured foot in his second game and Houston's Chris Bias, who had already passed for 1,800 yards and 16 touchdowns in seven games. We've got to touch on two California QB prospects: Perry Klein, who passed for over 3,800 yards as a junior at Pacific Palisades but now plays at Carson, and Hemet's Terry Payne, who is rumored to be Miami's (Fla.) top quarterback recruit.

RUNNING BACKS

Let's put 'em in two categories, the "big bangers" and "the rabbits." Robert Strait, Cuero, Tex.; Terry Kirby, Tabb, Vir.; Rudy Harris, Brockton, Mass.; and Jimmer Bundy, Woodbury, N.J., are the "big backs." None weighs less than 215 pounds and the slowest runs a 4.6. A note on Harris: he plays for the Brockton Bombers, the school named for the late undefeated heavyweight champion Rocky Marciano and is coached by Marciano's brother-in-law, Armont Colombo.

While capable of getting tough yardage, the real burners include Dewell Brewer, Lawton, Okla.; Lamel Foreman, Del City, Okla.; Derek Brown, Anaheim, Calif.; Russell White, Encino, Calif.; Michael Bates, Tucson, Ariz.; Odell Beckham, Marshall, Tex.;

Cedric Harper, Richardson, Tex.; and the list goes on, and on. While most of the Texas attention in this area will be focused on Strait, Harper rushed for 1,480 yards in his first six games. There's no shortage of talent in this year's crop, regardless of what offense the hopeful college team runs.

TIGHT ENDS

You can pick from the awesomely talented Pat Bates of Galveston, Tex., or you can go into New Jersey and look at Irv Smith, Pemberton, and Ted Page, Cherry Hill. Many feel Joey Mickey, the huge-handed, 6-7 and 240-pounder from Oklahoma City might be the answer.

This is a combat position in college and not many first-year players can make it at their chosen university. We think the ones we've selected have the best chance.

WIDE RECEIVERS

We've already mentioned Kevin Williams of Dallas and Eric Turrell of Tallahassee. Both reportedly have 4.4 speed and are considered outstanding at the most talented position on the team. If you want more size without sacrificing big-time speed, you can pick from Ray Griggs, Crete-Monee, Ill.; Horace Copeland, Orlando, Fla.; or Mario Henry, Medford-Lanape, N.J. We had to leave off too many highly regarded prospects at this position, so, you know the panelists have special feelings for the ones listed.

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN

This is where the least factual material can be found. Bob Whitfield (6-7, 270) of Wilmington, Calif., might be the best prospect. Or, is it Kevin Kelly, Santa Monica, Calif., who blocked the way for Glyn Milburn (now a return specialist at OU) to set a state single-season rushing record last year. Everyone has an eye on C. John English, Arlington, Tex., who has really come from the outer edge this season. John Karkoska, Aldine, Tex.; Lance Larsen, Moorehead, Minn.; gigantic James Carrigill, Plainview, Tex., are going to be hounded by recruiters, too.

We can't help but feel that 310-pound Lee Brown, Louisville, Miss., will be on that list along with Jeff Cancienne, River Ridge, La., and Rudy Barber, Carol City, Fla., all three set to entertain a ton of recruiters.

To be sure, there are more, many who we had to delete from our AA team.

LINEBACKERS/DEFENSIVE ENDS

The line of recruiters starts at the homes of Jessie Armstead, Dallas, and Tyrone Morrison of San Diego. They're both rangy and have running back speed. Joe Barry of Boulder, Colo., might be hard to recruit because his dad is on the University of Colorado staff. Sean Gilbert is the most imposing physical specimen (6-6, 235) and he makes no bones about the fact. "I'm a linebacker, not a

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defensive lineman." Speaking of raw, fast talent, it might be Antonio London of tiny Tullahoma, Tenn. There's a good chance he'll go out of state to school. This is a special position and maybe Richard McKenzie, Lauderdale Lakes, Fla., is the best to fill one of the spots. But, at the moment, the light-quick Armstead will create the most crowded recruiting situation.

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN

This is the other part of monster land. Never before has there been so many large and agile candidates. The likes of Cedric Bembry (Carol City, Fla.), Junior Bryant (Omaha, Neb.), Alonzo Spellman (Mt. Holly, N.J.), Tamasi Amiuannai (Vista, Calif.) and Pierre Wilson (Jackson, Miss.) all have the tonnage, quickness and attitude to be "big-time" on defense in a hurry.

Most of these young giants run the 40 in under five seconds but none are as quick as Houston's Shannon Jones, who's been clocked at an unthinkable 4.6. Despite many a plea, there are tight ends and defensive ends who'll move into this area as time lets their bodies assume the proper physical proportion. It's truly amazing how many of our defensive line choices list Nebraska and Oklahoma among the teams they are considering.

DEFENSIVE BACKS

Here's where the guessing game starts. Why? Because, many of these players in college often develop from former high school running backs or wideouts. The consensus is Derric Evans (Dallas, Tex), Cookie Massey (Rock Hill, S.C.), Odell Joyner (Virginia Beach, Va.) and John Davis (Pahokee, Fla.) can play in the secondary their first year in college. These four have specialized at these positions and Davis is growing large enough to try a tour at linebacker, if necessary.

The jack-of-all-trades is Grady Caveness, Houston, who leads his team in rushing and interceptions, plus he averages over 10 yards per punt return. His 4.4 speed won't be overlooked either. College coaches are looking for a particularly level-headed young man because the increase in the option offense, plus better collegiate passers and

receivers, broadens the defensive back's contact zone and field of play.

PUNTERS/PLACEKICKERS

We only selected two and each does both chores very well for his high school team. Paul Stonehouse, Los Angeles, has 50-yard field goal range and has

averaged slightly over 43 yards per punt for three years. Craig Henrich has nailed 13 of 15 field goal tries over the early games and his range is conservatively estimated at 45 yards. He also carries a 45-plus yards punting average.

There you have it. Hopefully, not to-

continued on next page

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A lot can happen between now and then. But at least four high school football players already have indicated they'll sign letters-of-intent with Nebraska on Feb. 8. One of those four is David Noonan, brother of former Cornhusker All-American middle guard Danny Noonan.

David Noonan, 6-foot-3 and 245 pounds, played both offensive and defensive line at Lincoln, Neb., Northeast High.

David was recruited by numerous major colleges, the most serious being the United States Air Force Academy and Brigham Young University.

But, he told Ken Hambleton of the *Lincoln Journal-Star*, "The bottom line was, I grew up in Lincoln; I've been to so many games here, and I watched my brother through four years. And this is what I wanted to do."

David said his brother didn't attempt to influence his decision. Danny "left me alone to make my own discoveries and my own decision," he said.

At least two other in-state recruits have made oral commitments to Nebraska: Mike Anderson, a 6-2, 215-pound tight end-linebacker from Grand Island High, and Lance Lundberg, a 6-5, 263-pound middle guard-tight end from Wausa.

Lundberg played on an eight-man team.

The Cornhuskers' fourth known oral commitment was from Lance Larsen, a 6-5½, 235-pound offensive and defensive tackle from Moorhead, Minn.

Nebraska is expected to sign a maximum of 21 scholarship recruits this season.

All-Americans continued from previous page
tally accurate because so many more schoolboy footballers have a lot to offer and we hope they get a chance to display their talents most successfully.

EPILOGUE

Almost to a person our panelists suggested it was too early to get an accurate idea of where these young men are leaning, but some hints were thrown out. Strait, the Texas running back, attracts some divergent views. One person says Texas is going all out for him and that OU has lost ground because of Brian

Dave Gillespie, the Cornhusker recruiting coordinator, told Hambleton: "We've done the background work on so many of the top high school seniors who were juniors last year.

"We've made contact and had more positive response from more of the players we feel are the best in the country than ever before."

A delegation representing the city of Miami and the Orange Bowl visited Lincoln and held a news conference in late November to assure Nebraskans that any unpleasant experiences they might have had on previous Orange Bowl trips shouldn't prejudice their opinion of Miami or the Orange Bowl.

Steve Hatchell, the executive director of the Orange Bowl who was formerly an assistant Big Eight Conference commissioner, said: "You won't even recognize the area, and you'll be surprised at the changes we've made.

"We want to get out and spread the word that this will be a good thing, made much better by the efforts of the people of Miami. The city of Miami wants to take special care of the fans from Nebraska, and they want everybody to know they've solved a lot of the problems we had five years ago."

The delegation also included Victor DeYurre, vice mayor and city commissioner of Miami, and Tom Wood, president-elect of the Orange Bowl.

"We've gotten the complete collegiate atmosphere and (the Orange Bowl is) a great place to watch football. There's still a hang-up with Nebraska playing Miami in Miami," said Wood. "But it's going to be the best game available. It's a super match-up, and the win-

ner stands as good a chance to be national champion as possible."

Nebraska's chance of winning the national championship "would be very, very slight," according to Coach Tom Osborne. "But you have to remember we played horrible for one quarter of one game and that was it. I think the coaches tend to look at schedule and record more than the writers, who look a little more at the record."

Even so, Nebraska was ranked sixth in the final regular-season polls of both United Press International, conducted among coaches, and Associated Press, writers and broadcasters.

Osborne may not have agreed with Wood about Nebraska's hopes of winning the national title in Miami, but things appear to be different than they were when the Cornhuskers lost the national championship to Miami, 31-30, in the 1984 Orange Bowl game.

"One thing about the last time we were there, (the Hurricane coach) Howard Schnellenberger manipulated the community and the whole situation pretty well, and I spent the whole week before the bowl ducking his helicopter. Well, Jimmy Johnson said he wasn't bringing a helicopter this time."

Osborne was referring to the Orange Bowl media day in 1983, when Schnellenberger arrived in a helicopter, which landed in the Orange Bowl Stadium.

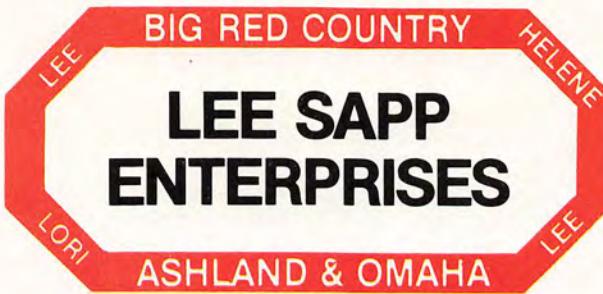
Nebraska's basketball team won its second annual Ameritas Classic tournament by defeating North Texas State 90-84 and San Jose State 90-76.

Cornhusker senior Pete Manning was chosen the tournament MVP. ■

Bozworth's book. Another Texas source claims the Longhorns are out while Nebraska, OU and USC are in the lead for his considerations. While Nebraska and OU are easily among the finalists for a number of these outstanding players (and everyone knows neither school can take everyone who wants to attend), they may have trouble keeping some of their in-state talent. Omaha's burly Junior Bryant was being rushed hard by Notre Dame, and OU will have to hustle to hold in-state running backs Lamel Foreman and Dewell Brewer.

(We must thank, among others, the

following for helping SMA conduct its search for the high school talent. The list includes, Kevin Newberry and John Marvel, *Houston Post*; Scott Reed, *Dallas Times-Herald*; Mark Tennis, *Cal High Sports*; Bill Buckhalter, *Orlando Sentinel*; Doug McDonald, *State College* (Pa.) *Centre-Times*; Merv Harris, *Daly City* (Calif.) *Record*; Rich Lewis, *Worcester* (Mass.) *Gazette-Telegram*; and staffers from the *Bergen* (N.J.) *Record*; *Newark* (N.J.) *Star-Ledger*; plus other written and conversational contributions from those who prefer to remain anonymous.) ■



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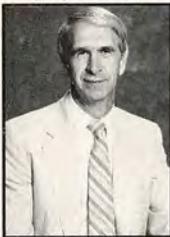
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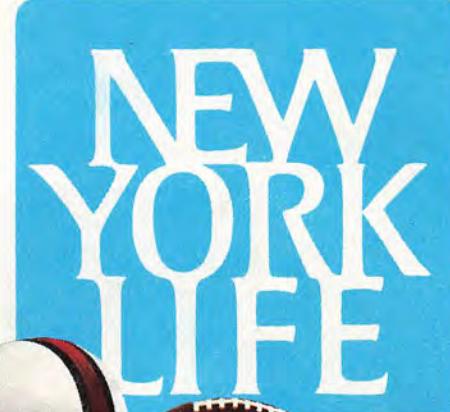
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